Faiths Neceſſity.

Diſcovering

OPINIONISTS VANITY,

OR,

A blow at the Idol of Opinion, from the hand of Faith.

EXPECT

Here the neceſſity of Faith to be diſcovered: as alſo what does not make a Believer, and what does; and (on the by) the needleſsneſs of all our pudder about Opinions. The whole ſuted to the meaneſt capacity;

FOR

The Edification of the Ignorant, Eſtabliſhment of Waverers. And (if it may be) Reclaiming the Sciſmatical.

8° Z. 41. Th.

By *EDWARD WELLS.*

Be it plain ſo it be profitable.

I will be yet more vile then thus, 2 Sam. 6. 22.

I am made all things to all men, that I might win ſome, Rom. 9. 22.

London, Printed by *E. C.* for *G. Calvert*, and *S. Sprint*, and are to be ſold at the Golden Ball, in *Duck-lane*. 1671.

Faith's Necessity.

Discovering

OPINIONISTS VANITY,

OR,

A blow at the Idol of Opinion, from the hand of Faith.

EXPECT

Here the necessity of Faith to be discovered: as also what does not make a Believer, and what does: and (on the by) the needlessness of all our pains about Opinions. The whole suited to the meanest capacity;

FOR

The Edification of the Ignorant, Establishment of Waverers. And (if it may be) Reclaiming the Scismatical.

By EDWARD WELLS.

Be it plain so it be profitable.

I will be yet more wise thou, thus, 2 Sam. 6. 22.

I am made all things to all men, that I might win Jews, Rom. 9. 22.

London, Printed by E. C. for G. Calvert, and S. Speed, and are to be sold at the Golden Ball, in Duck-lane. 1691.

To the Right Honourable, his very good Patroness, the Lady *Margaret Hungerfoord*, *E. W.* wishes all increase of grace here, and everlasting Felicity hereafter:

Madam,

AT it please your Ladiship to accept of this Mite of acknowledgement, for your Talents of unmerited Favours. This is all the Retribution I am able to make; and had not Divine goodness done for me beyond expectation, beyond desire, and much more then beyond desert, I had never been able to do this much. The subject (I hope) may seem acceptable: the form I must crave Pardon for: and should my discourse appear incoherent, I hope your Ladiship will hold me excused: since you very well know my busie Imploy-

ments: and that I could not have many hours in a day to enlarge my thoughts, nor yet in a Week, or a Month: But those I took for this task, were usually chosen after I had finished my Lords days duty: The matter of what I here present you with, appearing to me so necessary, that I have often chid mine own dulness and sloath, for that I have been so long about that is so speedily needed; and now it is finished, may it conduce to the of glory God, and be profitable to those that peruse it. I have my end. Your Ladyship may wonder to see this my attempt, in this captious age; being well acquainted with (as I to my self sufficiently conscious of) the bluntness of my Stile: but this I have ventur'd, because I know I was not born for my self, and that I have but a little time to be here: therefore am I willing do all good I can whilst here, according to your Ladyships example, in your convenient and noble Foundation of Alms-house, and Free-School, where you have dispended so Liberally and Charitablely, (of which, I think, I may call this some of the first fruits, being there enlarged from a Sermon to a Pocket Companion.) The good Lord make us every day more and more emulous in doing good, and to provoke one another to good works: that God may prosper their labours, that be willing to spend and be spent in his service: and eternally reward those that study to encourage his servants in their duty.

Madam,

So Prayeth your Ladyships much obliged and devoted Servant,

Edw. Wells.

TO THE READER.

Reader,

IN matters of concern to those we wish well, we use not to study complements: but write to them in the plainest and most intelligent manner; desiring rather to let them know what does most concern them, then what, and how we can speak or write: and are more careful of their good, then of our own ostentation and credite: not reckning whether others account us learned unlearned, so we can do our friend good; accordingly I have avoided terms of art, and fragments of Lattin, neither checker'd my discourse with saying of Fathers, nor Poetical shreds, nor filled my Margent with the Writings of Philosophers, and authority of Authors (though I confess: beholding I am to two eminent Divines of

this Nation: whose works are to be seen by others as well as me in some things, whom though I name not, the learned can discern when they tast the water, from what Fountain 'twas drawn.) Neither have I troubled thee with the several ways of defining and distinguishing, nor told thee how many descriptions I have seen of Faith, and which I approve, and of which I could give reason to the contrary, because I intended brevity. I have not ranck'd up and defin'd all the species or kinds of Faith, and told thee there is a Faith of God to Men, whereby he stands obliged (as he pleased by his most gracious promises to bind himself) to make good his Word. Nor of the Faith of man to man; or troubled thee, with a Temporary faith, a faith of Miracles: nor much with an Historical faith: but chuse to follow my main design, and keep close to Sanctifying Faith, that being it thou and I are most concerned in. Neither in this have I been curious about [*fides qua & qua.*] the Faith which we believe, to-wit the principles and fundamentals of Religion, which all Christians are to believe: epitomized or briefly set down and comprehended in the Creed, & more largely contained in the Bible: and the Faith by which we believe, to wit, a habit in the soul, acting it self in believing these principles contained in Creed and Scripture, and engaging to a life correspondent to such princi-

ples;

ples; as to accept of, and close with Christ Jesus on his own terms: which is the faith I have endeavoured to describe to thee in this Treatice, and shewed the necessity of, yet without considering either its chief genus grace, or its great and free doner God, (because this thou art supposed to understand;) that so the description being short might be the better remembred. Yet if any that know not how to supply what may seem wanting, desire to hear it at long, the difference is but this much. [Saving Faith is a grace given by God, which inclines the soul to accept of Christ Jesus, in all his Offices of Prophet, Priest, and King, and that with the highest degree of affection:] I have also omitted many distinctions, as of recumbancy, or affiance, and assurance, &c. Assurance, (that is a well grounded assurance) thou maist conceive, can be attained but by few, by reason of the often failings, and great sins, that we daily are guilty of, while in this House of Clay. Faith of recumbancy, or a rolling our selves upon God for Salvation when we have done, and endeavour to do all we can our selves, is every mans duty to furnish himself with, and never rest till it is compleated in him: not only as to a presumpteous hopes: but also as to his highest duties and endeavours, which may be a reasonable ground for his relying upon God, and hopes for mercy from him; therefore though we

can

can hardly say absolutely we shall have Heaven: yet if we perish any where, let it be at the Throne of Grace, with our faces Heaven-ward, and with *Job* resolve, *Though he kill me, yet will I trust in him: Job* 13. 15. Many more are the thing left out here, which perhaps some will expect; but if any search here for curiosities, I shall but deceive them; if they can be content to be sober and serious, I hope they may meet with something, that may profit them: for this subject seeming to me a matter of great consequence, I have not studied to please the curious, (for I suppose to know enough already;) but to fit it to the meanest capacity: both for Volum and Stile: knowing that the ingeneous are able to see the weight and worth of a matter in the meanest Dress: whilst the shallower apprehensions can see no worth, or reap no profit from the highest strains. And though I know there are many elaborate Pieces to this purpose, yet I find many of them are so obscure, that ordinary capacities can reap little benefit by them, being not able to discern what concerns themselves in them: and Authors more perpicuous are yet so voluminous that the poorer sort can neither spare the money to purchase them, nor the time to read them; my desire in this is: to fit my self to the meanest capacity and lowest ability: and therefore think to be neither large, nor affected. And that because I remember,

Reader,

Reader, thou and I, and each man that lives is so much concerned in this discourse. 'Tis not that thou needest not, or thou canst be happy without; but that thou must hear of shortly: and that thou standest or fallest by to all eternity. Had my business been a fancy, I should never have intruded into the World in this Bookish age: when every riper wit is emulous of glory; but since this is a concern for the good of souls; I shall be bold for the Glory of God, and the good of all those that desire their own welfare, to expose my self to the censure of the wise, and to the reproach of the malicious; in this first Essay; being glad if my endeavours may bring satisfaction and comfort to any; and wishing it beneficial to all that peruse it. For know, 'tis not out of any vain glory or self conceit, (if I know mine own heart,) that I publish these Papers: (for I know too much of mine own infirmities to do so,) but for thy good Reader, and the good of as many as shall think these lines worth perusing; and that because I apprehend it a publick concern: Sermons usually reaching but the ears of a few; and being forgotten with the most as soon as heard; and many wish (I know,) to hear or see what they have once heard, who by the reservedness of the speaker want opportunity to do so: and so they loose their wish, and he most part of his labour. But I shall forget if I be too long in this part of my

task

task: for 'tis an imprudence to be long in preface, where we intend to be short in discourse. I shall therefore onely add, if God may have Glory, and thy Soul profit, by what here thou readest, I have my highest aim and desire; and that both these may succeed accordingly, is the cordial prayer and desire of him that heartily wishes, the welfare of all that profess Christianity, and that they may be indeed, what they are in name, so prayeth

The most unworthy Servant of our most blessed Saviour,

Edw. Wells.

To

To the Doubting, Wavering, Uncertain CHRISTIAN.

NOW if ever I think is the age in which our Saviours predictions of false Christs and false Prophets that should deceive many, yea if it were possible the very Elect, is fulfilled. There being so many opinions going; and so many Learned Men among us, Men of great repute not only for parts but piety also: who yet are of so many ways,

ways and perſwaſions! and ſpeak ſo hardly one of another, that it has, and does, puzel many an honeſt heart to reſolve whom to hearken to: or what opinion to be off, eſpecially when they hear them ſay, theirs is the good old way, and the ſafe way, and that which Chriſt taught, and his Apoſtles and the primitive Church practiſed: and moſt freely and uncharitably to ſend to Hell all that are not of their way, and will not ſay as they ſay, and do as they do: as ſo teach Papiſts, Anabaptiſts, Quakers, and indeed all Sciſmatical parties; that withdraw from the Catholick Church: yea, ſome are gone ſo high, as to make it a crime, deſerves no leſs then Damnation to hear a Conformiſt Preach! Oh piety! and whether at laſt. I have ſaid ſomewhat in this little, that I hope may ſomewhat ſatisfie: and here do farther adviſe and counſel thee [to be ſure ſerve God ſincerely, believe in Chriſt, and live in obedience to the Goſpel, and never troubles thy ſelf about theſe vicities,] for, what is required more, but to fear God and keep his Commandments, which is the whole duty of Man, Eccl. 12. 13. And though I am not of his mind, that ſaid [he did fear God, believe in Chriſt for Salvation, and in all he could, labour to obey the Goſpel: but was yet to chuſe his Religion,] yet I am ſatisfied, there is not ſo much in modes of Religion [which many (as he) call Religion,] as the moſt think there is. Yet I know ſome Religions, Opinions, or Profeſſions, clearly contradict the principles

before

before named: as the Popish, that of believing in Christ alone for Salvation. And for all these heats among Learned men thou must know: first that those things will be while men affect singularity, as most ripe wits do. And besides, know thou Learned Men and so others, either Teach common Truths, [as the necessity of Faith, Repentance, and Obedience, and by these an Interest in God, and his Christ: so far are all to be hearkned to, and their perswasions closed with. Or else they Teach their own private opinions, as that this form of Worship is better then that; and this opinion safter then the other: and here thou maist give them the hearing, and use thine own liberty, so thou close with thy God, Love him above all, and serve him before, and more then all. Let also but thine own reason inform thee what all our contentions in Religion are about; not about the fundamentals, and ground work on which Salvation and Damnation do depend, but about lesser, and trivial matters! For all agree God is to be served, Christ believed in, Sin repented of, and parted with: but the heat rises hence, one saith this way God must be served, and another that. But I ask, why not as we are commanded by Authority? since there is in it nothing hinders, but that thou maist be as good as thou canst, and better then thou art, if thou wilt: and there's enough in it, to help thee so to be: all moderate dissenting Divines attend it themselves, and councel others to do so; and those do not, incline more

to

to passion then reason: no need then of all this stir, by Church-divisions, and Family-divisions, for opinion sake: but a heart established, and sacrified by Faith is all, which that thou maist have prays, thine in the Lord.

Edw. Wells.

Faiths Perelity.

CHAP. I.

Contains a preface. Unfolding of the Text and In-

Mark 16.

He that Believeth and is Baptized shall be Saved; but he that believeth not shall be Damned.

S for Religion in general, we live in an Age, in which it is as much spoken of as any, and as little practised? what more in the mouth, and what less in the heart? what more disputed for, and what more departed from? here are so many for *Paul* and *Apollo*, that there are but few left for *Christ*! So long have we been wording it about Religion, that Religion it self (with too many) is become but words and opinion! so

long have we been jarring, arguing and contending about the Truth, that we have almost lost our selves and the truth also!

And as it is thus with Religion in general, so with Faith in particular: almost every man is professedly a Believer, and too too few practically such! many talk much of Faith, but few live and act Faith. Few make any doubt but they are Believers, when too few know (specially by experience) what Faith is, or what the conditions on which they must be saved!

Ask a man, art thou a Believer? he readily answers, yes: but ask him what Faith is, either he knows not, or else gives some description of it, which he understands not: thus all hope they shall be saved, when few know how or why! How miserably are men puzled in these fundamentals of Religion, (especially the vulgar, for whose good I now write,) and how unable to resolve themselves about them. The reason of all being, either ignorance, they do not know what Faith, Repentance, and now Obedience are; or sloth, they do not care for learning; or else pride, they are too good to be taught; or too old to learn. And hence arise all our differences and divisions. Many through ignorance taking that to be Faith which is not: And many that to be Religion, which is but a meer mode or circumstance in Religion: And that to be the means to, and conditions of Life and Salvation, which is nothing to

that

that purpose. Many also through sloth, being content to swallow any thing, rather then be at the trouble of a more accurate enquiry; pinning their Faith on his sleeve they have most affections for: and making that their Religion he is off, on whom they have most dependance; and are willing to be any thing, so they may (in their way) enjoy more ease and negligent liberty, or get more profit, or reap more pleasure, than others do: hence 'tis, so many chuse, rather to sit at home then come to Church, to be profane rather then religious; to be nothing rather then to be at the pains to be something. To say nothing here of those profits and pleasures, which carry men down the stream of wilful ignorance, or at least, neglect of known duty. And then for pride how many does it pull back from learning their duty, on the one hand; and how many doth it thrust forward to an overweening conceit of themselves on the other. Many had rather (as eventually we may observe) venture, hazard, and loose Life, Soul, and Eternal welfare, then discover their own ignorance, or submit themselves to be taught; but are rather apt to say, have I lived this long? and professed Christianity? and am I now to learn what Christianity means? Others because they know more then some do: are apt to think they know as much as any can teach them: and are now got above ordinances, and being ambitious, their abilities should be known

to others: and thinking their private thoughts and opinions, worthy more publick view and knowledge; they begin to separate from the publick ordinances; and endeavour all they can to draw away Disciples after them: looking upon it as their greatest glory to gain followers. These are the grounds of all the devisions, separations, and errors among us; with which the Church is so much vexed at this day.

Therefore to remove this mist, and to make men understand where they are, and how far short of what they ought to be, and what they think they are: is the end, business and design, of this my endeavour and undertaking, to which end I shall now review my Text.

He that believeth and is Baptized shall be Saved, and he that believeth not shall be damned.

The words contain, *first* a Sentence or promise of Salvation, *secondly* a threatning or denuntiation of condemnation. Concerning both which consider in general.

1. The Author, Jesus Christ, the Text being his own words.

2. The subject, the Gospel, in which my Text is contained.

3. Object, Mankind, [he] every he and every she, high and low, rich and poor, young and old, one with another, all without distinction, (save what difference the Text makes of all.)

4. The time when he spake these words, and that

that was after his Passion, Death and Resurrection, than it was he taught his Disciples this lesson.

Whence we may observe these Notes for our Instruction.

1. The abundant goodness of God, in that he hath revealed, the conditions of life and death in the Gospel.

2. That the Gospel contains matter of terror, as well as matter of consolation.

3. That men whether believers or unbelievers, may read their final Sentence in the Gospel, and know in part, (or at least have a rule to know,) how it is like to go with them hereafter, before they go hence.

4. That the Apostles themselves, were [till after the resurrection of Christ,] in great part ignorant of the Mysteries of Salvation; and of Christs work and Office, as also of their own, as witnesseth their Query, *Acts* 1. 6. *Wilt thou at this time restore the Kingdom again unto Israel?* of which terrene apprehention savours that of *Zebedies* Wife, *Matth.* 20. 20. *&c.* And my Text it self was a lesson taught them after the Resurrection, which if known before, had not needed here to be repeated.

This note thus backed, may abundantly confute the opinion of some late *Enthusiasts*: who think all may be taught and learned in an hour, that concerns Salvation: when those who had

the beſt Maſter, and were themſelves no idle Schollars, yet in three years ſpace and upwards, made ſo ſmall a progreſs, and might have continued, thirteen or thirty years (for ought we know) as ignorant as then; had they not at laſt been taught by an extraordinary way. So that this will confirm that of the Apoſtle: *Paul Planted and Apollo Watered, but 'tis God that gave the Increaſe*, 1 *Cor.* 3. 6. The moſt learned, rouſing, convincing, informing, affectionate and effective Miniſters labours, may all be in vain, if God ſecond not his labours with a bleſſing, for the hearers edification. Yea, in vain does man teach the ear, unleſs God teach the heart.

And 'tis evident hence, that the accuteſt knowledge in Temporals may remain ſtrange and unacquainted with Spirituals. Which (by the way) may render invalid the conceit of thoſe who think natural parts improved, without Word, Sabbaths, Sacraments, or Miniſters: (the ordinary means of Grace, and conſequently of Salvation:) may ſafely and ſurely bring men to Heaven. Becauſe the Apoſtle tells his *Corinthians*, 1 *Cor.* 1. 26. *Ye ſee your calling, Brethen, how not many wiſe Men after the Fleſh, not many Mighty, not many Noble are called.* And in the 23. of the ſame Chapter: *We Preach Chriſt Crucified, to the Jews a ſtumbling Block, and to the Greeks fooliſhneſs*: And what Nations in thoſe days better or more nobly qualified then theſe two; which ſhews

the

the shortness of natural light or abiliments, And though indeed I believe that the great condemnation, of those to whom the Gospel has not been Preached, will be, because they did not live according to what they knew; yet I cannot apprehend that if they had done all they knew, that that had been sufficient to have brought them unto Heaven; for the Apostle tells us, *That without Faith it is impossible to please God, Heb.* 11. 6. *And he that believeth not shall be damned*, saith the Text: *And there is no other name given under Heaven by which we may be Saved, Acts* 4. 12. All which have little ground out of Scripture, of the strictest Heathens salvation. I know Learned *Dr. Hamond* in his Letters to Dr. *Sanderson*, limmits these Texts to those which partakes of Gospel Priviledges: how justly, it is not for me to determine; Only let me say in this all agree, [that Faith is flatly necessary to Salvation, to all to whom the Gospel is Preached:] and therefore the Texts cited are sufficient strength for my purpose. Yet there are these considerations, make me as yet doubt of subscribing the opinion of those that are for the guidance of the Light of Nature.

1. To see so dark apprehentions of God, among many of the learned *Heathens*, and what villanies and base acts they attribute to the *Deity* they did venerate; as Murders, Rapes, Robberies, Drunkennels, and more of that nature; be-

sides they limitted his power, knowledge, and goodness: both which those learned men either did believe, or they did not, if they did believe it, it shews how ignorant they were of God, his power and goodness; and so how far short of a saving knowledge of God: if they did not believe it, this shews, how presumpteous they were, not only thus taking the name of God in vain, but intruding so many lies upon the Divine Majesty; and obtruding so many base conceits upon the World: which, (what ever those Fabling *Poets* knew or understood,) found such general credit: that men fram'd much of their lives answerable to these fictions of the *Gods*: taking it to be a Religious duty to be Drunk, Unchast, Whores, and Whoremongers, Adulterers, to sacrifice men, yea, and themselves: and yet in all keep close to Religious rules and precepts. Which considered, makes me doubt of the light of natures guidance, though improved to the utmost.

2. It seems to me, that if men can come to Heaven without the Gospel, and without the Law which was before the Gospel meerly by the light of nature, then Law and Gospel are needless, and rather (seem to me) a curse then a blessing, (which I cannot imagine) for the more knowledge, the more duty is required, *Luke* 12. 48.

3. What need Christ have dyed, if men might have been saved without him? but since the Law could not save, which was given at *Sinai*, which

was

was but a renewing (as I think all grant,) of the Law of nature; how shall the Law of nature so much obscured, and almost (if not altogether) obliterated in many parts of the World, procure, or perfect Salvation, when by the deeds of the *Sinai* Law, which is far more perfect then that of nature; no flesh shall, or can, be justified, *Rom.* 3. 20, *Gal.* 2. 16. And therefore as for those needless questions (and therefore needless, because they concern not Salvation, but speculation,) I refer them to those, who have more leisure to consider them, and only add here, [known to God are all his ways and works; he does most justly all that he does.] When yet I seriously consider: the Chastity, Justice, Sobriety, Temperance, and Prudence (not to say Divinity) of some *Heathens*: their knowledge of God, their wholesom Laws and Institutions, their savoury writtings and exemplary lives, outstriping many (I doubt the most,) that call themselves Christians. "I dare not have so uncharitable thoughts, as to pass a Sentence of condemnation (no not in mine own breast) against them: but leave them to stand or fall to their own Master or Maker. And shall that content my self, to search into those things concern my self and mine estate. And advize others so to do with me. And so conclude (with submission to better judgements) that as those to whom the Gospel has been Preached, (they con-

"continuing in unbelief,) shall not be con-
"demned, because they did not what they could
"not; but because did not what they might and
"would not: So the Heathens: they shall not
"be condemned for omitting those duties they
"knew not, and therefore did not; but for those
"they knew and yet did not do them, for each
"mans condemnation shall be just, and that
any man is or shall be condemned, (I verily be-
lieve) shall be his own fault.

But more particularly, (to come to what I aim at,) we have in this Text:

1. Salvation tendered, or rather promised and assured.

2. To whom it is thus assured, and that is to *Believers*.

3. The condition on which it is assured, and that,

First, Absolutely and principally [Faith.]

Secondly, Less principally and subordinately Baptism. On the other hand, in the other part of the Text we have,

1. Condemnation denounced,

2. Against whom, Unbelievers.

3. For what, their unbelief; whence to begin with the last part of the Text, first conclude we,

1. That unbelief is an absolute damning sin.

2. That all unbelievers expecting Salvation, do but deceive themselves.

3. That it highly concerns all to know whether

ther they be believers or unbelievers.

From the first part these inferences offer themselves.

First, That there is such a thing as Salvation.

Secondly, That Salvation may be had.

Thirdly, That it cannot be had but on condition.

Fourthly, That those conditions are possible.

Fifthly, That justifying Faith is the main condition.

Sixthly, That Baptism is, and ought to be, a concomitant of Faith.

Seventhly, That 'tis a believers duty to make profession of his Faith, and by his profession to declare what his principles are.

Eighthly, That one way and means whereby we should manifest our Faith is, Baptism: for so we understand this *Text*, not as if Baptism were as necessary to Salvation as Faith, but because Baptism was in those days a believers badge: and an open owning of the Christian Faith; so that I understand the words to import this much; [he that believeth, and professeth or testifieth his Faith, by being Baptized, shall be saved,] which explication I am the rather induced to take up, because it may be conjectured, that in those days there were many Disciples of *Nicodemus* his temper, or the Parents of the blind man, who though they believed in Christ, were scarce come so far as to own him openly, therefore Christ seems

here

here to call for open profession of him by Baptism.

Understand, that I am speaking here of the adult and grown Christians, and not of Infants, but because this Text is alleged as an evidence against Infant Baptism, let me here briefly propose to them of that Judgement two or three Queries.

1. Whether children under the Covenant of Grace (and that by a special command) were not admitted Church-members, witness *Gen.* 17. 10. *Rom.* 4. 11. Now is this Law any where repealed? if we enquire into the Original of the Covenant of Grace, we shall find 'twas made with *Adam* in a short time after his fall: and renewed unto *Noah* and *Abraham*, long before the Law given at Mount *Sinai*: and Children, yea Babes at eight days old, commanded to be circumcised, before ever the Ceremonial Law was in being. And therefore, why should that which was four hundred and thirty years after, infring this Priviledge of Infants? or this be abolished with the Ceremonial Law, that was so long before it? especially since God no where repeled it: and we live under the same Covenant that *Abraham* and his children did long before the Law; the difference of the Covenant, as made to them, and now renewed to us, not being in the substance, or subject matter of it: but in the different dispensations, or manner of conveiance, with the different Seals. So that 'tis altered only in some

circum-

circumstances, but the substance is the same, and consequently children are to have the same privi-ledges now as ever.

2. I ask, whether Faith was not required in Circumcision, as well as in Baptism, and whether that was not a Covenant of Faith, to which Circumcision was a Seal, see *Rom.* 4. 11. And whether children are not now believers as far as then, and as capable of being Church Members, let any reasonable man judge.

3. Whether, when the *Anabaptists* opinion, (or *Baptists* as they would be called) first started up, they did not find Infant Baptism, an established ordinance in the Church, of neer fourteen hundred years standing, if not more: yea, it is no hard matter to prove Baptism in the Church before Christ; neither can they speak against it as an innovation, nor set any time when it first began, which is strange, if their opinion were primative, as they would have us believe: since no errour could ever yet creep, or steal into the Church, but found one or other to oppose it, and to lash it out of doors: thus find we *Austin* whipping the *Manichees*, *Tertullian* the *Marcionites*, *Clemens Alexandrinus* the *Gnosticks*, *Cyrus* the *Nesterians* and *Pelagians*: *Athanasius* the *Arians*. In a word, not an error, Heresie or innovation, has past in all the Church since Christs time, but is left recorded, and if not refuted yet opposed; and 'tis strange that Infant Baptism, being

being so generally spread over the Church, should meet with none to stop the Current of it, but spread over *Egypt*, among the *Coptyes*, *Armenians*, and all Christian Churches in the World without opposition, till of late years in *Holland*, among an inconsiderate people, and so thence into *England* in our late giddy times: had it been an innovation, doubtless some Champion would have opposed it before this last age of the world. And that the Fathers so vigilant and exact in observing all opinions, and opposing the erroneous, should neither tell us here of the time, nor the place, nor the occasion, nor any foot-steps of the rise of this supposed grand error: as we can on the contrary tell them the time, the place, and manner, of the rise of their conceit, which is so infamous, that I wonder how any sober understanding man can be an *Anabaptist*.

The very rise and foundation of it being laid in Rebellion, Blood, Rapine, Fornication, Sacriledge and all the villanies we may imagine, a rabble rout to commit in an uproar and rage against Ministers, Magistrates, and all other that opposed them. Yet this was the beginning of *Anabaptism* at *Leyden* in *Holland*, in the year one thousand five hundred thirty three (no longer since,) when one *John Becold* a Taylor made himself King, rob'd Churches, expell'd the Magistrates, plundred others, and Married fifteen Wives together. Let them give me a like credible

Narrative,

Narrative, of the beginning of Infant Baptism, and I will promise to be an *Anabaptist*, till then I shall thank God, my Parents were not seduced by them, and shall endeavour to make good my Covenant vow, that my Sureties engaged for me.

But enough has been said to this purpose, (if reason could prevail) by others, only this on the by, and so to return to my purpose.

CHAP. II.

Contains the Doctrine, and shews what does not make a Man a Believer.

MY Text you see is copious, those notes I have named, are all worth the speaking something to, but because none of those comprize my designed work, I shall wave them all, and lay down this general *Thesis* from the words, as the *Basis* of my farther discourse.

Doct. *Faith is the only condition of Salvation, but unbelief the sinking sin that drowns the world in eternal destruction*; Or thus,

Without Faith no possibility of being saved.

Whence I shall first endeavour to tell you what is not Faith, and wherein it does not consist:

and

and what will not make a man a Believer: next what Faith is, and wherein it does conſiſt, and what will make a man a believer; then why Faith is ſo neceſſary to Salvation; after why Faith being ſo neceſſary to Salvation there are yet ſo few Believers, then deduce ſome inferences hence, and laſt of all apply it.

I. What Faith is not, and what does not make a man a believer, I ſhall ſhew in thoſe particulars which many take to be Faith, or at leaſt truſt too much in for Salvation.

1. Faith conſiſts not in principles of morallity, theſe will not make a man a believer, as in [being true to ones truſt,] whether in publick or private concerns. Many, yea Heathens have been famous for this, and yet no believers. [Neither conſiſts it in Moderation and Temperance, in Meat, Drink, and Apparel, nor in Chaſtity,] for many far ſhort of Faith, have yet been famous for theſe: as *Cato* for Gravity, *Mivius* for Chaſtity, *Ariſtides* for Juſtice, *Amonius* for Patience, *Anacharſis* for Abſtinence, with many more practitioners of each of theſe and other vertues, none of which we can properly call believers, if at all: and therefore if this be all the Faith thou haſt, thou maiſt periſh notwithſtanding: for he that is no Murderer, Rebel, Whoremonger, Thief, Lyer, or coveteous Perſon, may yet be ſhort of being a believer, and ſo ſhort of Life: where then at once (if this be ſo) have we

left

leſt the rude multitude, in the midſt of all their pollutions? what muſt then be the eſtate of the Ungodly and Irreligious World? *If the Righteous ſhall ſcarcely be ſaved, where ſhall the Wicked and the Ungodly appear,* 1 *Pet.* 4. 18. What ſhall we think of Rebelleous Uſurpers, bloody Murderers, ſubtle Defrauders, pitileſs Oppreſſors, Lyers, Thieves, and unclean Perſons, and ſuch like? and what ſhall we think of the profane and perjured, of thoſe who make no conſcience of performing duties to God or Man, to perſons publick or private. Among which we may well reckon negligent Officers, who contrary to their Truſt and Oath, connive at the vices they ſhould puniſh, and are more affraid (or at leaſt unwilling) to ſee or hear Offenders, then Offenders are to ſee or hear them, who think him the wiſeſt man, that can ſlide through his Office and make leaſt noiſe or ſtur, and theſe are the Officers are taken for ſober and honeſt men; and at this rate has ſin gone ſo long unpuniſhed, that 'tis in many places (almoſt) unpuniſhable, Magiſtrates (or Authority) have ſo long hid their faces from vice, that now vice and the vicious, can with confidence ſtare them in the face. Moreover [to do to others as we would they ſhould do to us] is not Faith, thou maiſt be willing to do no man wrong, to be true, juſt, and faithful in all thy dealings, to live at peace and quiet among thy Neighbours, all this thou maiſt be willing to do,

and must do, and yet be short of a *Believer*, *Turk*, *Pagans*, &c. Have done and may do as much as all this, and yet fall short of Salvation.

2. Being born in the Pale of the visible Church, and receiving the Seals of the Covenant, and being partaker of the priviledges of Gods people, and the priviledges of those entered into Covenant with God, makes not a man a believer, Faith is not this, neither consists it in these, but is more, and goes higher. And yet (I fear men) many have and do deceive themselves in this case, and particularly those whose whole hopes of Salvation is, because they were born and bread among Christians, and have been and may be partakers of Christian priviledges, and therefore conclude they must needs be Christians. What say they, do not we hear the Word, observe the Sabbath, partakers of the Sacraments as well as others? and are not we sprung from Christian Parents? and have been Baptized, Catechised and instructed in Principles of Christianity as well as others? and what, not believers after all this? this seems strange and hard to them, but 'tis well known, though these are believers priviledges, yet they are not proper to believers: they indeed ordinarily agree to every believer, but not onely to believers. Witness *Simon Magus* who was Baptized, *Acts* 8. 13. *Annanias* and *Saphira*, Church Members, *Acts* 5. 1. And *Judas* himself

a partaker of the Lords Supper, *Luke* 22. 21. Yet all these wanted the Grace of saving Faith: and alas, what better ground of Salvation have many among us? nay many not so good, and yet very confidently think themselves believers, and therefore to have a right to Salvation. Take heed reader, thou be none of these; for if this be the best title thou hast to Salvation, I will not give one Farthing for thy Interest: and if this be the foundation of thy hopes and confidence, I am sure 'tis presumption and not Faith: thou wilt but deceive thy self and thy soul in the end, therefore if thou lovest either, look to it. For all this thou seest you maist do and be, (as before) and yet perish at last and that eternally, for want of what thou thought'st thy self sufficiently furnished with.

30. The profession and owning of Christianity is not faith: neither does this make a man a believer: Thou maist be as fair an external professor as the best, and yet be far short of a sound believer: for how many have there been, that have eat and drank in Christs presence, and gone so far as to Preach in his Name, and in his Name have done many wonderful works, *Mat.* 7. 22. and yet fall short. But many thousands (I fear) have little better reason to think they are believers then this, *viz.* because they profess Christianity, and do as well as others, but be ware you

of trusting to this, and going no farther, if thou love thine own soul.

2. Being of this or that opinion, and being zealous for it, does not make men believers. It has pitied me to see and observe, how many (I hope) honest hearted people, guided more by their affections, then by Scripture Rule, or yet right reason, have deceived themselves in this particular: who when they have found themselves in a doubt; where they are, or what they be; and not able to resolve themselves: and being either wilful and refuse to ask, or bashful that they cannot ask the advice of Ministers, (or knowing Christians:) they at last meet with some new knack, from some Sectuary, which suites better with their apprehentions; though not with the truth! And this easily perswades them to change opinion; upon which change they look upon themselves as nearer Heaven then ever: when they are but where they were. As far from Heaven, and in as great danger of Hell, as ever they were in all their lives. And yet (which makes their estates more dangerous) they are now so desperately secure, thinking all is well with them, that it is an infinite, and almost unexpected mercy, if they ever be Saved: for they are so confident and wise in their own conceits, that there is more hope of a fool then of them. *Prov.* 26. 12. How many men pinning their Faith on

their opinions, or rather making their opinion their faith, have been so earnest for it, as if Life and Salvation lay at stake; and there were no attaining Salvation but by that opinion. Hence is all their confident condemning of all those that say not as they say, and do not as they do. Hence they are bold and presumptuous, attributing to themselves the title of the People of God, Good-men, God's Children, &c. Either by this implicitely hinting, or otherwise audaciously affirming, all but themselves to be bad men, Children of the Devil, and such as shall be damned. But what more is all this great bragge: then that the worst of Men have had in their mouths. Thus *Corah, Dathan*, and *Abiram* with their competitors, said to *Moses*: and the wicked in *Isaias* time, *Isa.* 65, 5. Who said, *Stand by thy self, I am Holier then you*, yet what kind of people these were, you may see in the three Verses foregoing, *viz. A rebellious and a gainsaying People, that walked in a way that is not good, after their own thoughts, a people provoking God to anger continually to his Face*, &c. Those were they that were so self conceited; how far then from believers those men may be, who have the highest conceit of themselves, any reasonable man may judge. Opinion and self conceit therefore makes not men believers; no those that profess the true Religion, and are of a right opinion in the general; yet if they are not true to their Religion, nor right

particulars, are short of a sound Faith, and may perish eternally, though they have held, owned, and maintained the Truth; witness *Matth.* 7. 22. 23. *Have we not eat and drank in thy presence, and in thy Name have cast out Devils, and done many wonderfull works, &c.*

5. Morosity and sourness is not Faith, neither can it make a man a believer. There are some imagine all Religion lies in a sullen countenance, as if piety and cheerfulness were such strangers; that they could not inhabit in the same breast, scarce in the same house: but doubtless he that loveth a cheerful giver, loveth those that do him service, and perform each Christian duty, with all cheerfulness and alacrity: True [there is a time for all things:] but doubtless the Divine goodness is no whit delighted with unreasonable reservedness, and too much of dulbrow'd Melancholy; But to be served with all sprightly cheerfulness, so did *Moses*, *Deborah*, *David*, and *Solomon* serve him: and were there nothing else to confirm me in it: Yet the remembring that 'tis the nearest condition to that of the blessed Saints in happiness, to serve the Lord here with cheerfulness does, and though whilst we bear about us these bodies of sin, we shall have dayly occasions at least of penitential sorrow: yet the course of a Christians life should be full of solace in his God: what ever matter of trouble you meet with on the account of thine own sins, or the sins of others:

others: yet remember the Champions of the Gospel, who thought it no unmeet time or place to be heard singing in a Prison at Mid-night, most certainly, this over precize humour, has much deferred many frolick persons from resolving upon the due duty of a Christian; thinking they must then bid farewel to all Mirth: but yet mistake me not: I plead not for a licentious Religion; but for a Religious freedom for honest and Christian mirth: and our Saviour lets us know, how little the Pharisaical sad face was accepted: and it seems made so free a use of the Creatures that they said of him, *Behold a Glutenous Man, and a Wine Bibber, a friend of Publicans and Sinners, Matt.* 11. 19. And of this temper are some in our days, who cannot be content to keep their austerity & severeness to themselves, but are ready to pass a censure on all those are not as dull and lumpish as themselves. Christian gravity indeed is not to be condemned; but so is the superstitiousness of some: and though I abhor an Unchristian levity, yet I am confident the other extream has done much hurt, and is so far short of saving Faith, that it (in many things) falls short in meer morality: think not him therefore always the best Christian that is most mute and sullen: nor censure those that alow themselves in Christian mirth: for the first adds little or nothing to Christianity; and the last (with reasonable men) derogates nothing from it. I shall conclude, that

mens constitution may add much to mirth or melancholly, but neither in due latitude add or deminish Faith: by what has been said, appears more may; but this enough for thee to see this truth, that morosness is not faith.

6. Faith is not, (neither consists it in) ability to excel others in good works: the best of these do not make men believers. For constitution, Education, natural Gifts, as Memory, Elocution, &c. may fit and furnish a man, with more understanding of things, and with matter of argumentation, and prompt them to a greater redundity of speech, readiness in prayer, sweetness in expression, &c. and make him to be of the strictest course of life, more laboreous in duty, more free from vice then others: yet after all, short of being a believer, and may perish for all this: witness the proud Pharisee, he Fasts and Prays, pays Tithes of all he possesses, thanks God he is not as other men are, Extortioners, Unjust, Adulterers, &c. and does all this justifie him? *Luke* 18. 11. and *Rom.* 10. 3. The Jews had also Zeal, but not according to knowledge. Thou must therefore be sure, O man, to distinguish between Faith and Works: and not take the one for the other; for this was the ruine of the foolish Virgins, they had gotten Lamps, (an outward profession of Religion,) *Mat.* 25. 1. &c. Their Lamps were as bright on the outside as others, they stained not their profession with any enormous

mous vice, and yet had only empty Lamps; the Lamps of their hearts were not furnished with the Oyl of Grace. How many, or rather many thousands (as there is too great reason to fear,) have we among us this day, who though they have Lamps, and neat ones too, a gilded outside shew, and fair pretence of Religon, yet have empty Lamps, that is empty hearts, with which they deceive both themselves and others; themselves in thinking this is sufficient to Salvation; others in thinking them to be what they appear to be, and so though they profess Religion, and are spotless in their profession, yet they are far short of what they appear to be: yea, and what they themselves think they are, *Matth.* 7. 22, 23. If those that have Preached Christ, and cast out Devils in Christs Name, and done works not ordinary but wonderful, have fallen short of a saving Faith, judge you how easie a matter it is to be deceived! and how far men may go, and how much they may do, and yet fall short of Salvation! and how much then does it concern every one to look to himself?

7. A high flown confidence that we are believers and shall be saved, does not make a man a believer, neither is it Faith. Many have thus satisfied themselves, and thought they have been solid believers, because they never yet doubted of their Salvation, neither do they fear but they shall go to Heaven. But ask them on what ground

they

they are thus confident, you have little farther reason then that they are so perswaded: you shall have no foundation for this from any Scripture evidence, nor practical demonstrations: they are thus confident, and yet no more holy then others, nay perhaps more profane; they have no Scripture promises for it; therefore it must needs be presumption. *Paul* discovers no such confidence when he tells us, [*I keep under my body, lest after I have Preached to others: I my self become a cast away.*] 1 *Cor.* 9. 27. And if these men say they are thus perswaded because Christ came to save sinners, and they are such: yet they are not able to distinguish between the Sinners that Christ will save, and the sinners that Christ will not save: between the penitent, returning, obedient sinner; and the proud presumptuous, stubborn sinner: or if they say by Faith, why they understand no more by it, but this presumpteous confidence, or at best the History of the Creed and Scripture. But man if this should be all you hast to assure thee of thy eternal welfare: I fear Death will at one stroak end thy life and thy hopes also, *Prov.* 11. 7. For all this will not make thee just before God, nor give thee an Interst in Christ, therefore look to it: it is not thy confidence, but the ground of thy confidence which must give thee satisfaction, and assurance seems to me, so far from being faith, (in propriety of Speech, though many Learned Men have by this

described

described Faith,) that I look upon it as one of the latest, or at best, highest acts or fruits of faith, and is not the thing it self, but an effect of, or result from, saving Faith; and that when 'tis well grounded and setled: well grounded on the Word, and well setled in the heart, and farther confirm'd by the fruits of it in the Life, and not till then, all ungrounded confidence, is therefore but confusion to those that hug it; do not therefore deceive thy self.

8. And lastly, To believe that there is a God: and that he made the World, and all things therein: and that Christ came from God the Father, into this World to redeem Sinners: and a Holy Ghost, whose Office it is to Sanctifie all the Elect People of God: in a word to believe all the Holy Scriptures contain, as done, doing, or to be done, is not justifying saving Faith: an Historical faith indeed it is, but not a saving; for of all the species of Faith that the learned mention, I look upon these two, *viz.* justifying or saving Faith, and Historical; principlely to concern us in this age, (and some at present,) in reference to our future welfare; and all my fear is, that men do not put or make a due difference between these two; but that they take Historical Faith to be saving: and so think that when they believe, or are perswaded, that God and his Word are true, they have saving Faith, when they are far short of it, for mark it, if this is all thy Faith, the Devil is for

for present (though to thee there is a future possibility) as good a believer as thou, for *Jam.* 2. 19. *Thou believest there is one God, thou doest well, the Devil also believeth and trembleth*: If therefore thou O man go no farther then this thou art undone for ever! Alas! how many are there in the World, who have deceived themselves about Faith, taking it to consist in morality, or in opinion, or a Zeal for their way, or in excelling others in their gifts, or in believing God and his Word to be true, so that what he has promised, or what he has threatned shall come to pass, when all this may leave them at the Gates of Hell, and make them never the more sure of Heaven, Glory, or Felicity! all these may indeed be furtherances to Heaven and degrees, whereby we may come up to saving Faith; but are all short of it, and he that sores no higher is never like to mount to Heaven, nor scale the Walls of Felicity: he that travels farthest this way, will find it short of happiness; be wise therefore, O mortals, and look to your selves ere it be too late.

But after all, (as I hinted before) I would have you note, and note well; that though none of these is Faith, nor the essential fruits of Faith, nor Faith, and these be terms convertible, yet they may be, and usually (yea I may say inseperably) are concomitants of Faith; yea, and Faith cannot well be without them, at least, as to its demonstrative part in a Christian. And though all

these may be where faith is wanting: yet faith will be no where, but it will produce some of these: yet 'tis certain a man of a mean judgement may be a sound believer; every one that cannot defend the Truth by his wit, may be willing to do it by his Blood and Life: those that cannot well speak for the Truth, can willingly die for it, but we must suppose where is saving Faith, will certainly be morallity, profession of Religion, imitation thereunto by Baptism so soon as it may be had, closing with truth by opinion: and a desire or Zeal (more or less) to promote Truth in that way: also and above all, a believing God is just and true, in himself and Word, and a just rewarder of all our works: Let therefore no one that wants these, suppose himself to have faith: nor he that has these, there upon conclude himself to be a believer.

CHAP.

CHAP. III.

Shews what Faith is, and what does make a Man a Believer, and what the necessity of Faith is.

Quer. WHat then? if none of all this is Faith, what is? what can we do, or believe more.

Answ. Justifying faith is more then all these and to believe in Christ for Salvation, is a step higher then we have yet gone: but to tell you in short what it is: (I now come to the second thing promised, and say,)

Faith is a most affectionate accepting of Christ Jesus in all his Offices, of Prophet, Priest, and King.

Which description presupposes,

First, That the understand the History of the Creation, of the fall of man, of the Covenant of Grace, and Christs Incarnation, Passion, and Merits.

Secondly, It presupposes Christ and all his merits freely offered unto man in the Gospel.

Thirdly, That Man does stand in need of accepting and receiving Christ, and that it will be a great advantage to him so to do.

In the description it self you have,

1. The Object, Christ offerred to Man.

2. The

2. The Act, Christ accepted and received by Man.

3. The order or manner of this acceptance, with the greatest and highest degree of affection.

But more particularly.

First, This tells us, that faith, the very essence of faith, and that which makes faith to be faith, is, accepting and receiving an Offered Christ, and closing with him as he requires, as appears.

1. Because the Scripture makes accepting and receiving Christ, and Faith, to be all one, and unbelief and refusing Christ, or not recieving him to be equally dangerous, *John* 1. 11. 12. *He came to his own, and his own received him not; but to as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the Sons of God; even to them that believe on his Name.*

2. Because Christ is presented to us by the Apostle as a Suitor, 2 *Cor.* 5. 20. *Now then we are Ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech thee by us, we pray thee in Christs stead be ye reconciled to God:* Therefore accepting of Christ and granting his desire, is the Act of faith, that which makes up the whole match between Christ and the Soul.

3. Because the will is the commanding faculty of the Soul, therefore the act of the will must be the principle act, and its Act and Office is to chuse or refuse, accepting therefore, receiving and closing with Christ, is the act of the Soul, that

makes

makes faith to be faith: But its not every accepting of Christ that will serve the turn, but as before hinted in the description thereof, Therefore *Secondly*, Christ must be accepted as Priest, that is, an all sufficient Saviour, *able to save to the uttermost all those that believe in him*, Heb. 7. 25. We must not halve it with Christ, and hope our own righteousness will save us, that is, in an absolute sense; though as Gospel conditions, good works are necessary; yet, as our duties by us performed, they are so far from meriting, that they are sinful; we may therefore say with the Prophet, *Isa.* 64. 6. *All our Righteousness is as filthy rags*; and with *Paul*, Count all things but Dung and Drosse, so we may win Christ Jesus, and be found in him, *Phil.* 3. 8. Indeed we should live as if we had no Christ to save us; but yet we should so fully depend upon Christ, as if we had nothing of our own; for indeed our own by reason of our infirmity, is nothing, but as accepted in, through and upon the account of Christs Mediation.

But however, thus all are willing to accept of Christ; yea, the worst of sinners, when he has sinned all his life, would fain have Christ save him when he comes to die, then he will accept of Christ, have Christ then he will by all means; and therefore this shews, there must a be further qualification, to a due and right recieving of Christ to make it saving Faith. Therefore

Thirdly

Thirdly, Christ must be received as a Prophet to teach and instruct us; and here many fall back and will not submit: Saved by him all would be but taught by Christ, few will be; the most in our age are either too old or too good to learn, they are soon weary of Christs Discipline; and being his Disciples; there is so much of Catechism, which all should learn; and so much of Duty which all should (and must) live; (who will accept of Christ on his terms,) that few will be perswaded that the one or the other is necessary; till Death and Hell convince them, that none of all this is more ado then needs; they cannot, they will not be under Laws, for their Meat, Drink, and Apparel, nor for their Pleasures, Profits, and Honours. So thou mayest see, that most that would be saved by Christ, yet are loath to be taught by him! But suppose they would (as many do) give Christ the hearing, and many have so much piety as to bring them to Church; and many have so much patience as to hear their duty at Church, yet this is not all required; we have a higher degree, to the compleating of this grace of saving faith, and therefore,

Fourthly, We must receive Christ as our King, we must take him for Lord and Ruler, as well as Master and Saviour: Nay it is not enough to take him as our Priest, and Prophet unless we take him for King also; It is not enough to be willing

to be saved by him, unless we be willing to be ruled by him.

Now here lies the difficulty of all; all are willing to be saved by him, (understand me to speak of those here that own Christianity,) and many or most are willing to be taught by him, or his Ushers, i.e. They will willingly read a Chapter or two, now and then, or frequently, or perhaps constantly attend the publick Ordinances, and with delight (it may be) especially if they have a Minister that pleaseth their palate, *Isa.* 33. 31, 32. Yet when it comes to the Kingly Office, then most are ready to draw back, and will not have this man to Ralgn over them, *Luke* 19. 14. Like some Harlots, that are willing to have Husband to maintain them, or to cloak their shame, but cannot endure to live in a conjugal obedience to them; so these would have Christ to save them, and to credit them, but not to raign over them. But a true believer receives and imbraces Christ for Lord as well as Saviour, for Prophet as well as Priest, for King as well as Redeemer, as he would be saved from the jaws of Hell and Death by Christ, so is he willing to live in obedience to Christ; but as for these that will not thus receive him, let them hear their Sentence passed, *Luke* 19. 27. Those mine enemies that would not that I should rule over them, bring them hither, and slay them before me; but yet this is not all, we must go farther.

Fifthly,

Fifthly, We must take Christ for our King affectionately, if we would be found believers, with love and delight, as our natural Lord; not out of fear, as men admit a Tyrant to Raign over them, because they cannot help it; or as bad men yeild obedience to good Laws for fear of punishment, but out of a cordial love to him, as he that rejoyces the heart, and with as much willingness as a condemned person does his pardon, looking upon it as none of the least of mercies, that a sufficient Saviour, an able Teacher, a Mighty yet a Gracious King is found out for us, and accordingly we should learn of him with as much willingness as an obedient Child of a loving Father; submit to him with as much love as a vertuous Wife doth to her beloved Husband; and with as much alacrity as a diligent Servant doth to a bounteous Master, and yet more than all this to compleat the believer.

Sixthly, We must not only receive Christ with affection, but with the highest degree of affections, loving, esteeming, prizing him above all, and giving him the chiefest place in our hearts, like a vertuous Woman, accepts of him she makes her Husband, not with such a degree she loves her Neighbours, or Brothers, or Sisters, but with the highest degree of affection; her love to her Husband is above all her Loves: so must thou accept Christ, not only as lovely, but most lovely; not only as desirable, but most desirable, *the chiefest*

among ten thousand, *Cant.* 5. 10. Not onely welcome, but most welcome, accompting all b dross and dung so thou maist win Christ, and found in him, *Phil.* 3. 8. So oppose Christ the World, and love him more then it, yea the comforts we have in it, or all the pleasures it; This must thou do, man, if thou wilt ma feel thy self a believer, and shew thy self worth of Christ; for he himself tells us, he that lov Father or Mother more then him, is not worth of him, *Matth.* 10. 37. And much less those th love the World more then him, or their lus profits and pleasures more then him: Therefo not every love, but the highest, the commandi degree of Love is, that is required; To wit, th which keeps the heart entire, to God, and whol for God, as a true conjugal love keeps the wi for her Husband only: Mark then the gradatio of Faith, and how it rises from step to step to t compleating of it, shewing it self in and by the particular Acts, as

1. An accepting of Christ.
2. Accepting him as an all-sufficient Saviour.
3. As Master to teach.
4. As King to Rule us.
5. All this must be done with Love.
6. Not a Physical but a Moral love, not common ordinary love, but with the highest pitch of affection.

Yet the five first may be when faith is not,

the laſt that more properly and peculiarly demonſtrates a ſound believer. Thus you ſee,

Firſt, What Faith is not,

Secondly, What Faith is, and wherein it does conſiſt, I am now to ſhew,

Thirdly, The neceſſity of Faith, which indeed is manifeſt in the Doctrine, becauſe [without Faith no poſſibility of being ſaved, unbelief being the moſt ſinking ſin.] Faith is a Mother Grace, and unbelief a Mother Sin; theſe two divide the whole World, and alſo this Congregation, and almoſt every Family; paſſing a ſentence of ſalvation on the believing party, and damnation on the unbelieving; but more particularly, Faith is ſtatly neceſſary to ſalvation.

1. Becauſe no Faith, no ſaving knowledge of God, and as the knowledge of *the only true God, and Jeſus Chriſt whom he hath ſent is life Eternal*, *John* 17. 3. So by the Rule of contraries, ignorance of God, and his Chriſt, is Death eternal.

2. Faith is ſtatly neceſſary to Salvation, becauſe no true Faith, no true Worſhip, (and ſo no real pleaſing) of the true God, *Heb.* 11. 6. Unbelievers either Worſhip not the true God at all; or elſe worſhip him in a falſe and erroneous manner, which is near as bad; For ſome ſuch as theſe in a boaſting manner, are ſo confident of their faith, that they truſt, that ſhall ſave them (though they have none) without works; and others prize their works ſo high, they hope theſe may

have them without faith; and both these are alike deceived; for works without faith cannot save, nor faith without works, for faith without works is dead; the faith of Devils, not of *Abraham*. *James* 2. 17. &c.

3. Till we believe, no Salvation, because till a man is a believer all that he does is sin, *Prov.* 21. 4. *The plowing of the wicked is sin!* yea, their Sacrifices of prayer and praises, *Isa.* 1. 10. And moreover they are not fit to take the name of God into their mouths, *Psa.* 50. 16, 17. What a case then is an unbeliever in! How doth he *treasure up unto himself, wrath against the day of Wrath, and Revelation of the righteous Judgement of God*, *Rom.* 2. 5. And O man, if thy best performances are thus odious and hainous, what must thy more vile course of life be? if thy best sacrifices have so bad a savour, what an odium must thy Oaths and thy curses have. Alas man, what a case art thou in, whether at home or abroad, working or eating, sleeping or waking, thou art still about thine own execution, sinning against God, and against thine own soul.

4. Without Faith, no Salvation, because, if it were so, then were no distinction between the believer and the unbeliever, and the obedient and the disobedient, repentant and unrepentant; but reason as we are Men, and conscience as we own a Deity, and Religion as we are Christians, teach us that there is and shall be a difference put between

tween believers and unbelievers, so says the Text, and many more Texts, as *Mal.* 3. 18.

Many there are would fain find out a nearer way to Heaven then this; which will certainly be too short, true it is, and sad that 'tis so; if that Drinking, Swearing, Cursing, Revelling, &c. If blood Rapine, Whoredom, Theft, &c. with neglect of Sabbaths, Sacraments, and Ordinances would please God and bring Men to Heaven, then doubtless the most of our age would come thither; but if Faith, Repentance, new Obedience, and in, and by all these through the merit and mediation of Christ, [to please God,] be the conditions of Life and Salvation, How few have we will be at the pains to *work out their Salvation with fear and trembling? Phil.* 2. 12. Or at the cost to purchase it? If watching, fasting, praying, despising the World, hating sin, and loving God above all, are the duties will bring us to Heaven, and none else, how few have we will get thither, and if all this must go to make a man a sound believer, and nothing less: how few are there that are or will be at the pains to be sound believers? the most had rather hazard Life, Soul, and Eternal welfare, then be at this pains to assure all; they will not go beyond, nay scarcely come up to, the estate of Heathens that know not God; and how certainly must they perish for lack of what they contemn.

5. Because, till we believe we are under the

Law, and bound by it to perfect obedience, which (no man being able to perform,) does certainly condemn; all that have no more to shew but an interest in the first Covenant, or Covenant of works; by which none can expect Salvation, seeing the Law hath concluded all under sin, *Rom.* 3. 9. And that no man liveth and sinneth not, *Eccl.* 7. 20. And that there is none that does good, as *Psal.* 14. 1. So that if we are not saved by faith, we cannot be saved by Law, (for that admits no repentance) and by consequence, not at all, for he that is saved, must be saved, either by Law or Gospel; now no unbeliever can be saved by Gospel, and none that performs not the Law can be saved by the Law; for there are but two Covenants, to wit, do this and live; and believe and be saved: but no man can do the first, therefore no man can be saved, but he that fulfils the conditions of the Gospel, which no unbeliever does or can do whilst such.

6. And lastly, Faith is necessary, because it gives an Interest in Christ, by which Salvation is to be attained, and without whom it cannot be had; *For there is no other Name given under Heaven, by which we may be saved, Acts* 4. 12. 'Tis faith then that is the uniting grace, making Christ ours, and we his: Faith gives the believer a propriety to all Christs merits, and to Christ that merited all, *John* 11. 12. 'Tis plain therefore, that if no Salvation without Christ (which is most certain)

certain) none without faith, for faith only can give an Intereſt in Chriſt, 1 *Cor.* 3. 22, 23.

CHAP. IV.

Contains the reaſons why Faith (that is ſo neceſſary) is ſo much neglected.

THe next thing to be enquired into, is, why Faith being ſo neceſſary, is ſo much neglected? why men are ſo backward in believing, or how it comes to paſs, a grace ſo ſtatly neceſſary to Salvation, is no more ſought after: and the main lets or hinderances are theſe:

Firſt, Ignorance, Men do not well underſtand themſelves, nor the nature of faith, nor its neceſſity, nor what they are without it; nor what are the abſolute conditions of Salvation, nor the ſtat neceſſity of performing theſe conditions, more particularly.

1. They do not underſtand themſelves, they are ſtrangers to their own eſtate and conditions: here lies the great fault, Men know not that they are undone without they have faith, that without this they can never attain an Intereſt in Chriſt, the pardon of their ſin, and life and glory to come: were this well know, Men would ſure be ſtartled from their profaneneſs, careleſsneſs,

and

and indifferency in this particuler; nay, unless men would absolutely and wilfully give away themselves to the Devil, or yield to be his, and be content that Hell and Torment should be their Portion, they would not, they durst not live so carelesly as they do.

2. Ignorance of the conditions of Salvation is another let, they do not know that Heaven can never be had but on the conditions of Faith, Repentance, and new obedience; but they groundlesly hope to have Heaven, though they have none of these; and in particuler they hope to be save by their good meaning, by their good works, and honest dealings, as is Faith were needless; for this is the answer many give; and if they say [by Christ,] yet they are at a loss how Christ will save them, or why, or what he requires of them to furnish themselves with an Interest in him. For did men know that all their own Righteousnes will stand them in no stead, without the righteousnes of Christ, and that there could be no interest or part be had in Christs Righteousnes, but by Faith, they would see more need of it, then now they do, or can, and never look upon themselves in a safe condition till this Grace were wrought in them.

3. Ignorance of God and his Christ, and of the things of God, is another reason Faith is so rare: did men know God better, they would believe him more, and walk more correspondent

to

to his Word; but becauſe they know him not, therefore they live not to him, and long no more to have acquaintance with him; did men but taſte how good the Lord is, and know the love of God which paſſeth knowledge, they would love him more, and delight in him, and long for him more; and if they did certainly know that there is no pleaſure, ſatisfaction, nor content, like that which is to be found in a ſtrict and holy humble walking with their God, they would not dote ſo much on things below, and labour no more to know God, and to have an intereſt in him by Faith in Chriſt Jeſus.

Now the main cauſe of Ignorance, is want of good education, which that Parents may beware of; Let them conſider with me, that becauſe Children are not well principled in Religion, therefore they are ſo ſeldom found believers, when they come to ripeneſs of age; and ſo eaſily carried aſide by erronious principles, when they are grown up: And too to many trained up in a meer neglect of all duty to God and Man; and ſo of rude children, ordinarily profane men: and how different for the whole courſe of life, doth education make the affections of children, which are eaſily trained up to any Religion whileſt little, and as tenaciouſly hold the courſes they are trained up in when grown; how earneſtly have I ſeen children contend with words and blows for Religion, and that before they knew what Religion

gion

gion meant: or the ground and reason of what they contended for. So true a maxime was that of the Wise-man: *Train up a Child in his youth, in the way in which he should go, and when he is old, he will not depart from it.* Witness the Turkish *Janizaries* usually all of Christian extract; but being educated in the *Mahometan* superstition, are the greatest enemies in the World to Christianity.

And how zealous are the Papists in their way, and each Sect according to their education: and as for those that change their principle, they were educated in, they are very few comparatively, unless among us in these giddy times; the change of whose minds we impute to a bad principling in their tender years; or if not that, Grace to season sound principles: for we must suppose 'twas not for nothing God enjoyned the *Israelites* to teach, their children lying down and rising up, when they sate in the house, and when they walked by the way, *Dent.* 6. 6. A small twig is easily bowed to any use, but stubborn Oakes will sooner break then bow, the wax when hot easily takes impression, and children whilest young are easily bowed to Piety and Religion; A man may easily stamp an awe and reverence of the Divine Majesty upon their hearts, Parents care in education may therefore do much in rooting out ignorance, and for increase of knowledge and Piety.

Secondly,

Secondly, As ignorance, ſo ſloath keep men back from believing, and from ſaving knowledge: Men will not take the pains to ſearch the Scriptures, to obſerve Providences, and to ſearch themſelves and their ways and doings. They are loath to be at the labour to caſt up their Accounts, to examine their Eſtate and Condition, their Intereſt in Chriſt, and hope of Life; and that is the reaſon they can content themſelves in ſuch a perilous ſtate, and ſleep ſo ſecure in ſuch hazards, and can dance ſo merrily about the pits brink; without either Faith, Repentance, Obedience, or any other Goſpel conditions, and without fear, or care, or wit; this is one great reaſon that faith doth no more abound, becauſe few will be at the pains to ſee whether they have it or no, few will be at the pains to get it that want it, and few are willing to live a life of Faith. Had men looked into themſelves, and ſeen how it is with them, and what a loſt eſtate and condition they are in, even in the gall of bitterneſs, and in the bond of Iniquity, Children of Wrath, Heirs of Hell, and Eternal condemnation, without Faith! Who would dare to live any longer in this graceleſs, faithleſs condition: Would not men be ſtarled and amazed when they ſee how near they were to Hell, how certain to come there, if they held on in this caſe? Would they not begin ſpeedily to look out for help before it were too late; but alas, there is ſuch a ſpiritual ſloath upon men,

that

that they will rather hazard life and eternal happineſs, then be at this trouble with their hearts.

What ſaiſt man! Is not this thy condition: didſt thou ever ſpend one hours time in the diligent ſearch of thine own heart? How then doſt thou know how it is with thee? what man! doſt take all upon truſt, and let the affairs of thy ſoul run at the venture, if ſo, no marvel if thou live and act faith no more: nay no marvel if thou haſt no faith, and continueſt in thy Faithleſs eſtate, till it bring thee into a damnable eſtate.

Thirdly, Pride is another impediment that hinders Faith from being ſeeded and rooted, from ſpringing and flouriſhing in the hearts of men, for by reaſon of pride of heart, men will not ſubmit to the Teaching of Chriſt and of his Miniſters, nor believe it is ſo bad with them as it is, and as Miniſters tell them it is. But are ready to ſay: what do you think, that we have liv'd ſo long, and are now to learn what faith means! and what it is to believe? muſt we now queſtion our faith? and are we yet to lay the foundation of our Chriſtianity? have not we been profeſſors ſo many years? and are we now to doubt of theſe things? what Chriſtians all our days, till gray hairs are upon us? and now to learn the means of Salvation? what faith is? and how we muſt be ſaved? do you think we have been ſo badly inſtructed? or ſuch bad proficients? or ſo careleſs and negligent as to leave this work to do till now?

Thus

Thus they despise and thrust from them, the most necessary Gospel truths: and that which does most nearly concern them, as if it were not worth noteing or considering; and that which they are got far above; when alas they were never yet so happy as to attain to it, but, though they have been ever learning, they have *never yet been able to come to the knowledge of the truth*, 2 *Tim.* 3. 7. Yet they are confident all is well, and they will be the same men still, no better then formerly; perswading themselves they are already in a good condition, and shall come to Heaven without any more ado.

But thou, O man, take heed of this pride, if thou hast any care of thy self; for it has undone thousands already, and it may thee; remember, [God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble] penitent, what was it but self conceit and spiritual pride, that kept the Scribes, Pharisees, and Rulers from believing on Christ, and them so obstinately to censure all besides themselves, *John* 7. 48, 49. And to move so great persecutions against them? and this was the ground of the *Arrians* bitter persecutions of the other more Orthodox Christians. And of the Pope and Sea of *Rome*'s persecution at this day, in a word, pride is a desperate enemy to the Soul, and to all saving graces. The niping North-wind is not more hurtful to the tender budding Plants, then is pride to grace, as thou therefore tendereſt the welfare

of

of thy Soul, harbour not this enemy in thy breast.

Fourthly, Forgetfulness, or inconsiderateness, is another great hinderer of the growth and increase of faith, because men mind not what they are, where they are, or whether they are going; therefore they so little regard faith, and labour no more for it: did men know they were sinners and damned sinners without this, they durst never sleep without it, did they mind they are in a wilderness of cares, and in a Sea of sorrows, and temptations: they would think themselves unsafe, without this Anchor of Salvation, or Brestplate of righteousness.

Did they but mind their latter end, and think but whither sin is leading of them; and where sin will shortly leave them, and what must be the wages of sin, and that to all Eternity; they could never think themselves safe in this condition: what can we judge that those men that commit sin with greediness, do mind, how short time they have to enjoy their lusts, and the sad account, that ere long they must give for them? do they consider where must be their eternal abode, and who their companions for ever? whether they can dwell in everlasting burnings? If they were sure they were out of their way to Heaven: and that the course they take will certainly end in Hell; durst they rush into sin like the fed Horse rusheth into the Battle? if all this

were

were laid to heart? who would or who durst live any longer without the Lamps of their hearts trimmed with the Oyl of faith, least the Bridegroom coming, and they not ready, should be shut out of the enjoyment of felicity.

Fifthly, Wilfulness is another great hinderance; men are wilful and resolute, and will not be perswaded that faith is that it is, and that there is so much requited to make a man a believer, or that faith is so flatly necessary to Salvation, though they are daily taught the necessity of a holy Life: and all the three Gospel conditions Faith, Repentance, and new Obedience: yet they go on to be the same men still; he that was filthy is filthy still, and he that was unclean is so still. Men will not be convinced and perswaded, no not by arguments fetched from Heaven and Hell, from God, Scriptures, and Conscience; nor from this life or that to come? all we can say will not work; the Drunkard will have his cups, and the Whoremonger his Harlots, and so each Sinner his sin, though Hell be the next that follows.

Sixthly, Another let (I fear) is, the neglect of Ministers, many do not labour to lay a good foundation of Christianity, in treating of those three conditions of the Gospel Faith, Repentance, and Obedience. Some through ignorance, some by carelessness or sloath, others through pride; rendring themselves not half so profitable

as they might be: for whilst one studies more to avoid Preaching handsomely: then to Preach profitablely: another Preaches in generals, and a third himself more then Christ, chusing rather to astonish men then instruct them. The main Building of Christianity and Propagation of grace, and the work of Salvation go on but very slow: and few are brought home, built up and established by these; need I tell these men that the main work of a Minister is to make men understand themselves, and the way to Salvation, and what 'tis necessary to know, and do, if ever they would be happy; and to make his notions stoop to his Auditors capacity? but since many look upon all this as below them, they over shoot the mark they should aim at; and render all or most of their labour unfruitful, so that most of their hearers, are as great strangers to their present state, and the true nature of particular grace, as ever they were.

Seventhly, And lastly, On the peoples side, I am veryly perswaded and confident, that want of a cordial closing with, and conscientious performance of the duties their particular Ministers have and do teach them, is another main reason that Faith is so rare. Had men but made it their business from week to week, to live over that they were taught the Lords day, what a reformation had we had long since? how long since had the Drunkard left his drunkenness, the Whoremonger

ger his Uncleanness, the Sabbath-breaker his Prophaness, and each Sinner his sins? but does it not eventually appear, that the most of haerers come only to hear, and to too few to learn. Curiosity leads many, and custom leads others, but conscience leads (I fear) very few to Church: for take it for certain, that those are brought to Church in the morning by conscience (nothing extraordinary intervening) would by the same, be engaged to be there in the afternoon; and that he that makes conscience of hearing, would also make conscience of practising what he hears: but because so few make conscience to live by what they hear, we have too much reason to doubt, they come with too little conscience to hear, and have less in hearing. Yet (alas) what a strange fancy possesses the heads of most in this age, most congregations thinking few or none good enough to teach them: but almost all we teach are to good to learn, yea from the best Teachers! what a pudder do many Parishes make, if they have not a Minister fitted to all their humours (which is of an impossibility,) when they have their choice and wish, he shall soon loose their affections, and his own good name, if he but endeavor to gain by reason, what their coveteousness prompts them to detain by fraud, madness indeed to think none sufficient to Teach, but themselves too wise to learn! to speak indifferently, I know none so weak in teaching (suppose his principles be

sound, and his doings contradict not his Doctrine) but he may easily teach more in a day, then the best will live too in a weak, perhaps in a year: if men were then but reasonablely Religious, what need they cavil at any mans Preaching, when they are not able to do beyond his saying? But the mischief is (in this age,) we are all wise enough to teach: and too few of us wise enough to learn. All which being too true, I reckon this a grand hinderance to the spreading of this grace of Faith, because people will not live to what they hear.

CHAP. V.

Applies what has been said, and hence shews the Vanity of opininonizing.

THe Doctrinal part being thus ended we shall now apply all, and

1. For information, if faith be so flatly necessary to Salvation, then hence we learn,

1. How much it does concern men to be believers: alas, Life and Death lies on it. Man, you must be a believer, or thou art undone for ever: looke home then to thine own heart and see how 'tis there. Salvation to thee, if you art a believer, but certain damnation to thee if you art not.

If

If your dare to go on and live and die such: for there is no middle place, or middle condition propounded. We are all of us this day with our faces towards Life or Death, comfort or torment; and now maist thou be thine own Judge, and be able to pass Sentence on thy self for Life or for Death: if you art a believer thy face is Heavenward, if an unbeliever thou art passing (yea posting) to Hell, and a few more days will bring thee thither; as jovial, merry, and regardless as now thou art! yet see the end thou art hastning to! each day sets thee down nearer to the brink of the pit then other: thou wast not so near to death this morning, but thou art nearer now: nor so near to Hell last hour, but thou art nearer this! and if not this hour, yet within a few more (if you continue to live and die such as thou art, an unbeliever) Death will open the infernal Gate to thee, and Hell shall shortly close her mouth upon thee, and thou shalt take up thine eternal abode among Devils, and damned Spirits, and those thy torments shall then begin which shall know no end.

2. Hence learn, how little reason men have to hope for Salvation without faith. Faith being the great condition of it, then all hopes where faith is wanting must needs be groundless, and will certainly in the end prove frustrate, to the ruine of those that rely upon it. A man may as well hope to pass the Sea without a Vessel, or guide

himſelf in ſafety to his harbour without an helm, then get to Heaven without faith, which is the main compaſs or guide to direct the ſoul in ſafety through ſtorms of temptations, and the main ſway and ſtay of the ſoul through this Sea of troubles. The Husband-man may with as good reaſon, hope to have a fruitful crop without Plowing, Soiling, and Sowing; or the Merchant a good return without Adventures; or the Labourer wages for the work he never did: as a man can expect or hope for Heaven, bliſs and glory without faith. Faith is the believers labour, and Heaven his wages: (and believe me 'tis no Play-game to be a ſound believer, for every ſound believer is a Labourer indeed, and he ſhall have his wages.) But expect not thy wages without thy work. Faith is the Seed, and Felicity, and Glory the crop. But coſt, care, and labour, preceeds the crop; ſo muſt faith, fruition. Faith is the believers Venture, in this bottom he ventures all that he has, and the return will be anſwerable: and bring home, more then he could imagine, expect, or hope for, for *Eye hath not ſeen, Ear hath not heard, neither has it entered into the heart of Man, to conceive the things which God has prepared for them that love him, and believe in his Name*, as 1 *Cor.* 2. 9.

3. I infer hence, that faith is not ſo common as ſome ſuppoſe, nor ſo eaſily come by, as moſt imagine; it carrying difficulty in it ſelf to be compleated,

pleated, and ſo few among us have ſpent any time in compleating of it; who among us has ſpent one day to dig after this Jewel, this Pearle of great price: that has ſate him down one hour in good earneſt, to examine his heart, whether this grace be found in it: and how few that yet underſtand their abſolute loſt condition without it? but too to many that ſee no need of Chriſt nor no lovelineſs in him: and can we imagine theſe men are believers? What! a believer, and able to live without Chriſt? and yet how many (pitty!) how many among us that are ſuch believers!

4. This teaches the needleſsneſs of all our noiſe and ſtir about opinions, for faith is not a meer opinion or perſwaſion: neither conſiſts in Modes and Ceremonies of Religion. But is the groundwork and foundation of all true Religion, and the great condition of the Goſpel promiſes. And moreover that they much miſtake themſelves, that think every different perſwaſion in ſome circumſtances of Religion is difference of faith. I cannot perceive that changing our opinions about ſome leſſer Modes of Religion, does make us more or leſs believers, or ſet us nearer to, or remove us farther from God. But I know that by faith we are brought neer to God: and without it we are at a diſtance from him, let us be of what perſwaſion we will. For want of underſtanding which it is, that many have ſtep'd from Religion to Religion, and from one Sect to another, till

they have lost both themselves and their Religion. Taking up with opinions they have neither tryed any time, nor understood at all; and having so done, think it stand's not with their credit to confess their error, and to return to the truth. This (I am verily perswaded) is the condition of very many this day: who have run through and tryed many, (I had almost said all) Religions; and what have they gotten by all? have they found out a nearer way to Heaven then others have done? or is their way easier then this? must not their Teachers teach, (and they believe in) the same Christ as we do? and tender salvation on the same conditions? can any of them dare to Preach or promise Salvation without Faith, Repentance, and Obedience; if so, why do they not declare their skill and make it good? if it cannot be had but on these conditions, and they must undergo this task: at last, after all their changes: why do they seperate from our congregations? and so carefully avoid communion with us, as if we were Infidels? Is there any reason for their withdrawing, or that any should follow them meerly for opinion sake? will this countervail for the mischief they do in the Church, by making Scisms and Divisions, and creating heart-burnings between those that believe the same Christ? some such were sprung up in the Apostles times, the evils of whom, and the mischiefs they did, he enumerates exactly. 1 Tim.

6. 3, 4, 5. [*If any man Teach otherwise and consent not to wholesome words, even the Words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the Doctrine which is according to Godliness: he is proud, knowing nothing, but doting about questions and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings, perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds and destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is Godliness: from such turn away.*] Is not this an exact pattern of our times, and the very fruits of our devisions, having set neighbour against neighbour, Brother against Brother, and Father against Son! and what need all this? when we all hope to come to Heaven by the same means, or at least there is but one way by which any of us can get thither, and that by Faith. And those that dare offer Salvation on other terms are grand impostors, and deserve the Apostles curse, *Gal.* 1. 8. Which if well weighed, we should not have men so wedded to private opinions about circumstances, as to neglect the substance, nor to Anathematize others because they will not square with them in every punctilio; Know thou therefore, O man, that 'tis not being an Episcopatian, or a Presbyterian, a Lutherian, or a Calvinist, a Protestant, or a Papist, a Quaker, or an Anabaptist, but being a believer, or a unbeliever, that saves thee, or damns thee. What need you all that raillery and stir between party and party? 'tis all odious before God and Man; and all this bitter-

they have lost both themselves and their Religion. Taking up with opinions they have neither tryed any time, nor understood at all; and having so done, think it stand's not with their credit to confess their error, and to return to the truth. This (I am verily perswaded) is the condition of very many this day: who have run through and tryed many, (I had almost said all) Religions; and what have they gotten by all? have they found out a nearer way to Heaven then others have done? or is their way easier then this? must not their Teachers teach, (and they believe in) the same Christ as we do? and tender salvation on the same conditions? can any of them dare to Preach or promise Salvation without Faith, Repentance, and Obedience; if so, why do they not declare their skill and make it good? if it cannot be had but on these conditions, and they must undergo this task: at last, after all their changes: why do they seperate from our congregations? and so carefully avoid communion with us, as if we were Infidels? Is there any reason for their withdrawing, or that any should follow them meerly for opinion sake? will this countervail for the mischief they do in the Church, by making Scisms and Divisions, and creating heart-burnings between those that believe the same Christ? some such were sprung up in the Apostles times, the evils of whom, and the mischiefs they did, he enumerates exactly. 1 Tim.

6. 3, 4, 5. [*If any man Teach otherwise and consent not to wholesome words, even the Words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the Doctrine which is according to Godliness: he is proud, knowing nothing, but doting about questions and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings, perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds and destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is Godliness: from such turn away*] Is not this an exact pattern of our times, and the very fruits of our devisions, having set neighbour against neighbour, Brother against Brother, and Father against Son! and what need all this? when we all hope to come to Heaven by the same means, or at least there is but one way by which any of us can get thither, and that by Faith. And those that dare offer Salvation on other terms are grand impostors, and deserve the Apostles curse, *Gal.* 1. 8. Which if well weighed, we should not have men so wedded to private opinions about circumstances, as to neglect the substance, nor to Anathematize others because they will not square with them in every punctilio; Know thou therefore, O man, that 'tis not being an Episcopatian, or a Presbyterian, a Lutherian, or a Calviniſt, a Protestant, or a Papist, a Quaker, or an Anabaptist, but being a believer, or a unbeliever, that saves thee, or damns thee. What need you all that raillery and stir between party and party? 'tis all odious before God and Man; and all this bitter-

bitterness of Spirit altogether to be condemned, as savouring more of sensuality then Christianity; according to the Apostles description of such, *James* 3. 13. *Who is a wise man, and endued with knowledge among you? let him shew (out of a good conscience) his works, with meekness of wisdom; but if you have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth; this wisdom descended not from above, but is Earthly, Sensual, Devilish; for where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work.* Is not this a true description, and exact Painting out, of the spirit of many of our subverted Proselites. The greatest part of whose piety consists, in an Antipathy to their former principles, and hatred of, or at best great hearts-burning against all that are not of their way: & their greatest heat of zeal is shown, not in praying, reading, hearing, attending the ordinances and searching the Scriptures: but in scorn of ordinances, and railing against those that never did them wrong. And when they have nothing to condemn them for in their conversations: take Gods work out of his hand, and will needs be heart-searchers; and condemn such for notorious Hypocrites, Deceivers of the people, proud, coveteous, and what not of such a rabble. All which we have cause to pitty in them, rather then be offended at them, since as much has been said of our Master, and if they call the Master of the house *Beelzebub*, what can the servants otherwise

wise expect? *Matt.* 10. 25. But how contrary this is to the charity and the wisdom which is from above, may be seen from *James* 3. 17. *&c.* And 1 *Cor.* 13. 4. *&c. Charity suffereth long and is kind, Charity envyeth not, Charity vaunteth not it self, is not puffed up, doth not behave it self unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil, rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth, beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.* So [*the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle and easie to be intreated, full of Mercy and good fruits, without partiality (or wrangling) wittout Hypocrosie.* Where we may see, if we compare the lives and languages of most seperatists with these Texts: how they that pretend to more of Christianity then others, have an Unchristian Spirit; and those that make themselves wiser then others, discover their need of that wisdom which is from above, by their uncharitable bitterness. Come therefore, thou that art sincere, who desirest to serve God in Holiness, and to live with men in peace and righteousness. Let you and I never trouble our selves about these nicities, circumstances, shadows, and trifles; but let us believe in Christ and serve him; Obey God and love him, and that with all our hearts, with all our souls, and with all our strength, according to the conclusion of the whole matter, *Eccl.* 12. 13. Let us *fear God and keep his commandments,*

mandments, for this is the whole duty of man. Consider you how much they crosse with the nature and office of Faith, who expect to be saved by their opinion, and lay more wait on that, then on the grace of faith! and how grosly do those delude themselves; who change their profession to quiet their conscience, and think they are gotten one step nearer to Heaven, when they have new Baptized themselves, or named themselves by another name; for they formerly labouring under convictions and redarguings of conscience, conceive this to be the onely way to help them: and upon this change have charmed all quiet, by an overweening conceit that God is now reconciled unto them: because they are got (as they think) among a more holy people, or are now of a more pure profession; when they are but where they were, and no better believers then before, and must still undergo the same task of believing, repenting, obeying, *&c.* or else are never like to be saved.

Nay suppose they were of the most pure way, yet the true profession will never save those that are not true to their Religion: and none can be true to their Religion, but those that are sound professors, and who are sound professors, but believers; Nor do they less befool themselves, who think they are regenerate sound believers, and true Christians, because there is some small change wrought in their lives; as many times we may see

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a Swearer grown modest, a Drunkard grown sober, a Lyar begin to speak truth, a rugged Husband grown more kind, and a Spend-thrift more careful: such changes are common upon their pretended conversion; any and all of which fall short of Faith; though indeed they are good preparatives for farther degrees of grace, and it were to be wished, all the profane were come thus far: but if they go no farther, I have shewed already how far short they come of believing, and by consequence of being saved, and how like they are to perish eternally (and certainly may do so, if they go no farther) for all this! Yet this is the conversion their Teachers use to boast of, as a Seal of their Ministry, calling us to witness the like: when indeed they set men but in a securer way to Hell, and send them down more plausablely to eternal ruine, taking opportunity hereby, to perswade their proselites, that this is Sanctification, which is but morality: and that Faith which is but works, and that the fruit of faith, which Heathens have done before them, yea, and outgone them in: and that now they are in the way to Heaven, when they live but like men: and that this will save them, when they know no more what faith is now, then heretofore; neither have any better Interest in Christ, and have no more assurance of Heaven: (though perhaps a more presumpteous confidence) then before, they leapt into this new Element: not

opinion

opinion therefore, but faith is that does save.

5. This shews us, men may be of the same faith, though differing about many points of opinion: and so though the Papists and Protestants manage so great a contest against each other, about Transubstantiation, the Popes Supremacy, & other ceremonies, yet he among them, that is a sound believer, is of the same faith with the most refined professors; & those that are their greatest Antagonists, if found believers are of the same faith with them, trusting in the same Christ for Salvation, and taking the same Redeemer for Teacher and Ruler: and so we may say and conclude of *Bellarmine* and *Whitaker* (supposing *Bellarmine*, as in Christian charity I think we may (a sound believer) to be of the same faith: and though he maintained many errors, yet who (though a believer) lives without them? or who hath written much, which in the esteem of some hath not written or asserted some errors. But he that reads *Barnard* (though he was a Papist.) I think will find him speak like a sound believer, and solid man, though there be some of the Romish dross, intermix'd with more serious matter: and who can then deny him and *Wickleiffe* (how different soever in opinion) to be of the same faith? to say nothing here of ingeneous *Erasmus* & others: nor yet the *Calvenists* and the *Lutherans*, since their contests are not about matter of faith but ceremony. All this therefore considered, should stop the mouths of

of those bold Interogators and rash Censurers? who when they have used, or consequently abused the words of the Apostle: *Eph.* 4. 5. *One Faith, one Baptism*, &c. Censure others and say, where then is the faith of Conformists? and where is the faith of the *Presbyterians*, or the *Anabaptist*, or the *Quaker*? why they are of the same one faith, if they are sound believers, agreeing in the same Spirit, and the same Hope: *Eph.* 4. 4. All true believers being of this body: neither am I alone in this opinion. *Grynæus* writing to his friend *Chytræus*, saith, if I see thee no more on this side the Grave, yet we shall meet where *Luther* and *Zuinglius* very well agree. So that he reckons these to be of the same faith, notwithstanding the heat and differences there were between them, in some circumstances of Religion: let this therefore teach us all moderation, in censuring of those, whose lives witness for them, that 'tis their care to live a life of faith.

6. This does teach us the vanity of those men, that make such breaches in the Church, meerly for opinion sake; and such hot contest about matters of small moment. Neither let any think me in this to plead for a toleration; nay, what I have said rather pleads for unity of Religion and Profession, since there is but one faith, and that faith as well to be obtained, and fully to be compleated, and as absolutely to be enjoyed, in and under the established Government of the Church,

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as any other ways whatsoever: and what need you the retaining of other names and titles of division? what serve they for, but make people of of the same Nation of different Factions and Parties; and to have several ends and designs: to creat heart-burnings and emulations, and strifes in the same Parish, yea in the same house! 'twere happy for *England*, if we were once all of one heart and mind to serve the living God, and that the hateful names of Scisme, were banished from among us: But this is more to be wished then expected. Christ has affirmed 'tis necessary, that offences should come; but wo be to him by home these offences come, *Matt* 18. 7. Let me therefore counsel thee, O man, to lay aside all this fruitless geer, to ply the main business, to wit, to get thy heart furnished with faith, and to grow in grace, and so, to come to be a Christian indeed; & then whilst thou hast the substance, leave it to others to wrangle about shadows: only let me add, 'tis no wonder Dissenters differ from us; when they differ so much among themselves: and their breaches are often times so unhappy to their own concerns: and if we talk with them apart, we shall and do find scarcely two of a mind: but what one has granted, the other refuses to stand to: which makes me doubt they have no rule of faith, whereby to regulate themselves: not are yet agreed upon the principles of their own Religion: but are most of them like the *Ephesian* crowd

crowd in that great uproar mentioned, *Act.* 19. 34. Most of them come together they know not why: neither understanding the profession they forsook, nor knowing well that they have closed with: but *Athenian* like, our age being delighted with new things, they would needs change the profession, (or rather the Mode of Profession) they were brought up in, for another, because as newers, like little children love new noises, and are delighted with new Garments, though the old be more warm and serviceable; so these love new opinions, though the old be more wholesome. Do you therefore, Reader, settle thy mind in the good old way.

7. This teaches us that men that are in point of Faith, are exceeding dangerous and pernicious; because he that errs here, errs in all; nay and more Salvation it self lies on it. Hence *Athanasius* begins his Creed, with, [Whosoever will be saved, 'tis necessary that he believe, &c.] And concludes, [he that believes not this, cannot be saved.] Mistakes about smaller matters may be born with, but errors of this nature are not to be endured: it were therefore to be wished, that there were a confession of faith required of each of the Sects among us: which all of that Sect should be bound to stand to: that so we may know what to judge of them, and who may be tollerated, and who not: for I have observed a great animosity between party and party: yea,

and those of the same party condemning each other, and whether there be sufficient cause or no for all this stir and pudder, raillery and mischief to themselves, and to the Church, I leave to any reasonable man to judge: and that the most, of the most furious of either part, are yet to seek for solid reasons, for those their breaches: though they damn each other to Hell, they know not why: but onely for some jealousie they have in their brains: and fears of what is never like to come to pass: Nay, will not believe men though they protest their sincerity herein: and though Popery were never more protested against, Preached against, and sworn against; yet some men will not believe, but that Popery is bringing in: and upon this conceit, fly us as if there were neither Truth, Conscience, nor Religion, left among us: and could not fly us more, were we Papists, Mahometans, or Pagans, I think this is very uncharitable, and that men might better manifest Christian meekness and unity, by considering how nere our principles come to theirs, at least to truth, which is far better. This all that seperate may easily do: because our foundations are evident, and known to the World, but theirs as uncertain as ours known, for what one of them affirmes another denies: and what one of them extols, another vilifies, and that, though they be of the same party: and among those of the same Sects, he that is applauded by

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one is condemned by another. Oh distractions! Oh confidence, or rather impudence! What will not men say, do, affirm, or deny, for the advantage of their own parties! and 'twere to be wished this were in matters of circumstance only; but I fear 'tis in substance also. For we see there are too many, very unable to give a good account of their Faith; who yet make no small bustel about Religion, and others as erroneous in this thing of so great weight, (to wit Faith) as absurd in matters of smaller moment; and therefore (I judge) to be carefully avoided, and rooted out of all Christian Societies: for though we can away with a Family or Person infected with the Measels, or small Pox, which though contagious, yet not so deadly: Yet who will bear with those have the Plague sore upon them? how closely are they shut up and garded? And I cannot but admire in observing how careful Magistrates and People are in this case: and yet careless in looking to, and looking after, those are far more infectious to the soul, then those forementioned to the body! who, to say nothing how they infect Families, Parishes, and whole Cities, with sedition, strife, envying, and disquiet, yea sometimes (and too oft,) with Rapine, Blood, Murder, and Rebellion; and (which is more and most dangerous,) endanger the souls of many: overthrow the faith of multitudes: and (as may be reasonably be feared) eternally ruine thousands; And

are not many this day in this Nation in danger by these infections? are they not daily labouring to augment their Disciples? enticing of Servants from their Masters, Children from their Parents, yea, and Wives from their Husbands, and Husbands from their Wives, to the no little discontent of all Well-willers to Peace, whether publick or private. I censure, I condemn no one party or person here, for some I honour, I love others, and wish wel to all that differ from me in many things: but am and shall be a resolute opposer of all I apprehend, unsound in the Faith: not of malice (if I known my own heart,) but out of love to their and others souls. For, as an error in mixing wholesome meats together is small, it may be nourishing, though Cook'd none of the neatest: and I judge I may safely feast with those that provide wholesome food for their guests; though I love not every dish is brought to the Table, and no dish there be dressed to my wish. But when Physick is to be made, which concerns the health and life of man: that must be done skilfully and carefully: neither is he to be tollerated that erres herein: nor reckoned lesse then a Murderer: So here, none should be admitted to mingle or temper Spiritual Physick, but those that can and will do it with skill and care: for an error here is dangerous to the patient, yea deadly and damnable: therefore take heed of these men, shun them as the most villanous in the World: and

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make it thy great care, not to comber thy self about trifles & contentions that profit not, neither are of concern whether they are credited or practised or not: but leaving others (since it must be so,) to their liberty and humour herein: look thou to thine own soul: and the main concern thereof, to wit saving faith. So much for our first use of information.

CHAP. VI.

Contains terrour to unbelievers Tryal, for all to see and know what they are, and perswasions to try our selves.

2. THis sends forth a word of terrour, to all those shall dare to live, in an unbelieving condition: for they see there is no possibility of being saved, as such, for their Sentence is already past upon them; *John* 3. 18. *He that believeth not is condemned already; and that because he hath not believed on the only begotten Son of God:* and what estate now more dreadful? would'st thou be found thus at Judgement? when the Trumpets shall be sounding, the World flaming, the Seas roaring, and Christ in his Majesty with all his Holy Angels appearing? what a dreadful condition wilt thou then be in, if this should be thy case? and

thou no better furnished for this estate then now thou art? and knowest thou how soon that day may overtake thee? how dar'st thou then sleep in quiet, or eat with comfort, when thou art so near thine end, and so unfit for it? when thou art not sure of being out of Hell another day? and knowst not but thou maist awake in Hell the next morning! one night must be thy last, and how know'st thou but this may be it! many have rose as well as thou didst this morning, and have been dead before night! or have gone to bed as well as thou art like to do this night, (and with as little sign of death,) and have been dead before next morning! and art thou sure this shall not be thy lot? and what a case art thou in, if it should be so? if Hell and all its Torments; if the Devil and all his Angels, and if all the damned must endure to all eternity be dreadful, then this is so: and, thou in a dreadful condition! Weigh this well, and read it again and again; if a damnable is dreadful, so is thine; if thou go on to die in the estate of unbelief thou art now in.

3. For tryal; What a dreadful case is this? may some awakened soul say! what shall I do to know, whether I am got out of this danger? or whether my soul yet lies at this hazard? Man, if this be thy desire read on, and seriously weigh and ponder what comes after, and take thy self to task upon every head; reading no farther, till

thou

thou art resolved in thy mind, whether thou hast this sign of Faith within thee or no.

1. Then, had'st thou ever yet a sight and sense of sin? art thou acquainted with the rottenness and deceitfulness of thine own heart? did'st thou ever yet apprehend thy self in a damnable condition without the merits of Christ Jesus? if so, all this is a sign of Faith, or at least faith is wanting where this is wanting, for each sound believer is really sensible of this; as *Paul*: *Rom.* 7. 24. *O wretched man that I am: who shall deliver me from the body of this death:* And *David*, *Psal.* 130. 3. *If thou shouldst be extream to mark what is done amiss, O Lord who shall stand?* But now where Pride, Self-conceit, and Boasting are, 'tis an evident sign of unbelief: for the unbeliever is apt to think the best of himself, and the Saint the worst, as Saint *Paul* hinteth: 1 *Cor.* 8. 2. *If any man think he knoweth any thing, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know.* And 1 *Cor.* 10. 12. *Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.* And *Rom.* 11. 20. *Be not high minded but fear.* And farther in 1 *Cor.* 9. 26, 27. *So fight I not as one that beateth the Air, but I keep under my body, lest when I have Preached to others, I my self become a cast away.* By all which it appears what the soundest Christian doubts of himself, and what he would have others cautious of thinking of themselves: and also what the most unsafe, are apt to think securely of themselves. Let others boast of their

works of Supererogation, (or doing more then is required of them;) but let thou and I do what we can, and when we have done all acknowledge, *we are but unprofitable Servants, we have done no more then was our duty to do.* Luke 17. 10. We know what some of the worst of men think and say of themselves, *Isa.* 65. 5. *Stand by thy self, I am holier then thou:* And so *Corah* and his company, *Numb.* 16 3. *Ye take too much upon you ye Sons of* Levy, *seeing all the Congregation are Holy:* Whilst *Lemuel* cries out, *Surely I am more brutish, then any man, and have not the understanding of a Man, Prov.* 30. 2, 3. And *David* complains, *Psal.* 73. 22. *So foolish was I, and ignorant, I was even as a Beast before thee.* So *Solomon* acknowledges, *Prov.* 24. 16. *The just man falls seven times in a day:* and adds, *who can say I have made my hands clean, I am pure from my sin? Prov.* 20. 9. See then what little reason any man has to be puffed up: what thoughts the most holy and humble have had of themselves! and how all have had a sight of sin, that were Sanctified by faith, even to the Thief upon the Cross, *Luke* 23. 39. And this sight of sin, and of thine own vileness thou also hast upon thy Spirit, if a sound believer. For sin being once discerned is never out of sight: this (know thou) is the lowest work of faith, the first degree and step towards a sound believer. And who ever has the least measure of saving Faith, has a full sight of the damning nature of sin:

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and therefore if this is wanting in thee, thou art no believer.

2. Wast thou ever sensible of thy need of Christ? and of thy lost and undone condition without him? whosoever has had a sight of sin, and been sensible of the damning nature of it: will doubtless be driven to despair of mercy in or by himself: and so in the next place he begins to look about for a remedy: and soon finds no other means for Salvation, but Christ alone. For if he look up to God he is an angry Judge, strong and terrible, having been provoked by him day by day: if into the Law that curses him, and calls for vengeance upon him, if to the creatures they are all insufficient to save him, yea, his present comforts they will shortly forsake him: if he look below him Hell is gaping for him. So that all these afford no succour, unless he look into the Gospel, and so up to Christ, the Author and Meriter of those glad tidings, and roll himself upon him; and resolve to be Christs Servant, so he will be his Saviour. In a word, 'tis the work and business of justifying faith, to send a man out of himself to Christ; and to convince him that there is no Salvation in any other: and that therefore there is an absolute necessity, of making Christ ours: and so makes the soul willing to do any thing Christ would have it to do, so it may have an Interest in him: and ready to submit to

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all his Laws. Wast thou, man, ever thus convinced? let conscience speak, and then do thou judge, if this is not so in thee, thou art short of a sound believer: if 'tis so, 'tis well.

3. Hast thou taken Christ for thy Saviour, Teacher, and Ruler? or has Sin and Satan ruled in thy heart? and Lorded it over thee? ask thy heart this question: was I ever willing to have Christ Rule and Raign in my Soul? and have I been as willing to serve Christ, as to be saved by Christ? as willing to do his work, as to have his wages? know man, 'tis one main work of Faith, to make the heart willing to have Christ dwell in it, and rule in it, and where Christ does thus abide and rule, there certainly is saving Faith: whether this is thy case, let thy conscience tell thee.

4. Hast thou ever had a singular love to Christ: and delight in him? hast thou looked upon him as the chiefest of ten thousand? dearer to thee then all that ever was lovely in thine eyes? and to be prized more then Son or Daughter, then Father or Mother, Wife or Children, yea, then thine own life, *Matth.* 10. 37. This where 'tis, is a noteable sign of Faith: for none can love Christ thus affectionately, but onely true believers; and no greater tokens of love then these: if this is thy condition, let thy heart leap for joy, and lift up head, heart, and hand to Heaven, and bless him whose gift it is: But, if you be one that thinkest thou canst do well enough without

Christ:

Christ: or one that's weary of him, and his ways; or seest no great need of him, nor loveliness in him, these are evident signs of a faithless heart: much more, if thou lovest thy farms, or thy bags, or thy sordid lusts more then him, dost thou discover the infidelity that lodges in thee.

5. Faithful men are praying men, much in prayer and praise to God: and is this thy case? know man, if thou neglect this duty in thee: Read the History of Holy Write, and shew me one Saint, that was not a diligent and daily Petitioner at the Throne of grace: Was not *Abraham*, *Moses*, *Samuel*, *David*, *Solomon*, all the Prophets, all the Apostles; yea, and the head of all our Saviour himself; all patterns of this part of piety: and so thou, if thy heart be sanctified by Faith, wilt be much in prayer.

6. Faithful men are full of peace, love, charity, gentleness, and humility, with other good works. Do these dwell in thee? but as for anger, wrath, strife, drunkenness, fornication, they are in dwelling in unbelievers, as thou maist see, in 1 *Cor.* 13. 4. and *James* 3. 13. &c. Which when thou hast read, thou see which comes nearest thy state: hast thou, and dost thou live peaceably with God; or hast thou been, and dost continue to be a violater of Gods Laws? or a robber of men, of either life or chastity, goods or good names, &c. according as thy life has been, and is, so conscience

will give in Verdict, if thou wilt but pause a little here, and give it leave to speak.

7. A faithful man has a love for all that are faithful: yea, though they differ in some things. And highly esteems those that are Godly, though they cannot say as he says, nor do as he does: and is this thy case? among all our differences, I have observed that the most make faction and affection the main boundary of their love and charity. Dost thou do so? this savours of an Heathenish or Pharisaical temper, and not of a believing genius. For, he that is faithful loves all the signs of faith, and is ready to lay aside all pettishness and vain emulations, against or towards such. By all this try thy self, and well weigh every one of these caracters, and by that time thou maist be able to judge, whether thou art a believer, or an unbeliever: and that I may prevail with thee thus to try, mark what follows.

Be perswaded man, to close with, and try thy self by these rules, because Faith is so flatly necessary to Salvation, and there are (as is to be feared) so few sound believers, and so many that mistake themselves, and deceive themselves about this matter. Try thy self therefore, whether thou art what thou goest for, and what thou professest to be, and thinkest thou art: (to wit a Christian indeed, and a believer indeed,) and that for these reasons.

1. Because this tryal can do thee no hurt: but

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it may do thee much good; for, if thou upon inquiry findest thou hast this grace, 'twill afford thee much comfort, and fill thy mouth with thankfulness to thy God for this mercy. And suppose the worst: that by examining thy self, thou find thou hast not this grace, thou wilt have this great advantage upon the search, to wit, of time, opportunities, and all means and helps that can be wished, for the obtaining of faith, and furnishing thy heart with it: but should'st thou neglect this a little longer, and spend the remaining time of thy life, as thou hast the past time: and squander away future opportunities and means, as hitherto, it will shortly be too late for ever, and thou wilt be eternally undone.

2. Because, 'tis exceeding dangerous to suppose our selves believers when we are not.

First, Because 'tis a means to make men secure. They think all is well with them, and that they are in the ready way to happiness, when all is as bad as may be, and they are posting the direct road to eternal misery.

Secondly, Because this conceit renders the word unprofitable: how exceeding hard is it to get within the self conceited man? if we lay down the doom of sinners, he thinks himself no such one! if we press Faith and Repentance upon men, he thinks himself above these: and looks upon such Doctrine as useless to him; for he supposes he has believed and repented long ago. This

man can read or hear, all the terrible threats and curses against sin and sinners, and never wax pale at them, and the most dreadful, heart-shaking Sermons, that send sinners down to Hell for their sins, do not make him to smite upon his thigh! yea, were such a one told [thou art the man we mean] he would not believe it!

Thirdly, 'Tis dangerous, because damnable in the end: let them be never so swoln with pride of heart, and high in their own conceits, yet shortly all their hopes shall perish with them, and they be undone for ever, 'tis therefore most dangerous to be unacquainted with our own hearts.

3. Till thou hast made this search thou neither know'st where thou art, nor what thou art, nor whither thou art going, whether thou hast thy face toward Heaven or Hell; and art an Heir of happiness, or a child of the Devil: and this, for want of examination! and art not thou in a sad case? how miserably maist thou deceive thy self? for when thou expectest to go hence to *Abrahams* bosoms: thou maist go hence to *Dives* torments. And when thou thinks to be taken to Christ in Paradise, thou maist be cast to *Judas* in misery, look therefore to thy self, that thou maist be able to know thy self: and whether thou hast best ground to expect bliss or torment, when thou goest hence.

Know

Know friend, this is no jesting matter, but that body, soul, life, and eternal welfare are concerned in.

CHAP. VII.

Gives Cautions, Consolation, Direction, and an earnest perswasion to close with those directions, and to improve the whole.

4. THis cautions us, that since faith is so flatly necessary to salvation, we should take heed,

1. Of giving our selves leave to meditate, plod, scrutiny, dispute, or waste time, about any other matter or matters of Religion; before thou hast established thy soul in a sound, justifying faith. What pitty is it to see men waste so much of their precious time, about that is so needless; and those owning the same Christ, professing to believe the same Gospel, &c. to be snarling one at another about trifles, whilst they neglect the great concern, and waste that time in vain dogmatising, which they should in Evangelizing. Quenching that Christian charity by strife about words and modes: which they should cherish for the edification one of another! and oftner enquiring, what think you of this or that opinion, way, wor-

ship,

ship, &c. then [what think you of faith? wh
is it? or, what must a man do and be to b
Christian!]

2, Beware of taking one Faith for anothe
Historical faith for sound and saving faith. N
thing more common with vulgar Christians, th
to think themselves believer, because they belie
the Creed and the Scripture, when saving faith
another thing. For what the better am I to b
lieve that there is a God that made me and all t
World, unless I know this God is my God, a
that I have an interest in him, and may call hi
Father? or what the neer though I am taugh
yea, know and believe that there is a Christ th
Redeemed all Mankind; and that he might be
All-sufficient Saviour; was so conceived, bor
and suffered, was so buried and rose again, as
spec fied and declared in the Creed unless I kno
he is my Redeemer, and I have an interest in
this and benefit by it? and what availeth it me
that the Holy Ghost is the Sanctifier of all th
Elect people of God: so long as I find not m
soul Sanctified, my life bettered, not my hear
softned? or can it be any comfort to know, ther
is a Holy Catholick Church, and that they sha
have Remission of sins, communion with Sain
in Bliss, and Resurrection to Immortality an
Glory: So long as I am not certain, whether I am
one of the members of this Church: and though
I believe the promises of God to be true, yet if I

fulfi

fulfil not the conditions of them, what comfort can I reap from them? they being all conditional, and the Divine goodness no way obliged to make good his promises, unless the conditions on which they were made were fulfilled and kept. And believing the threatnings of God shall be upon the head of the wicked, will not save me from them, if I am wicked. 'Tis not therefore believing these things to be true that will do our turn; unless we live as those that reckon themselves concerned in these promises and threats: being terrified from sin by the threats; and encouraged to duty by the promises; (which are the effects of justifying faith.) Therefore the belief of the truth of Scriptures, is not the faith we are saved by: but such a believing as engages the heart so close with the promises, upon the conditions contained in them, and limitting of them a belief engaging the soul to keep the commands, to dread the threats, and avoid the sins those threats are denounced against.

3. Take heed of laying too much stress upon justifying faith: this is an error easily slipt into; and many are taken by it, or mistaken about it, by taking that for their Saviour, which is but a means to Salvation, and the condition of it; not the purchaser of it. Thus the *Israelites* worshiped the Brazen Serpent as a God, which was but a means of their health, 2 *Kings* 18. 4.

4. Leave not thy soul in doubt, but see that

thou resolve thy self: that Salvation is to be had by no other means but by Christ; and Christ to be had by no other means but by faith: beware of thinking Christ may be had; or Heaven obtain'd on any other conditions; *For there is no other Name given under Heaven, by which we can be saved, Acts 4. 12.* 'Tis not thy good words nor thy good works (though these accompany faith) but Christ that is all in all; burnt Offerings, and Calves of a year old will not be accepted; nor will he be pleased with thousands of Rams, nor ten thousands of Rivers of Oyl, *Mica. 6. 6. &c.* Nor if thou give the fruit of thy body for the sin of thy soul: No, but he hath shewed thee, O man, what is good. And what doth the Lord require of thee: but to do Justice, love Mercy, and walk humbly with thy God, and how can a man be just to others, that is unjust to himself, or merciful to any, so long as cruel to his own soul: or yet humble if he will not be saved but by his own means and way? or resolve to perish unless he can be his own Saviour? yet this do the incredulous World, and the almost Christians among us: they would be saved, but it shall be (as they hope) at an easier rate then this of Believing, Repenting, or Obeying: or they would come to Christ, but they will be more humble, and more Holy first; and then they hope, they may be accepted with Christ, and obtain Grace, Heaven, and Glory: but what's this, but to hope to merit

Salva-

Salvation: or to merit Christs favour by being Righteous, and such as they ought, before they come to Christ. But thou beware of this: true, it is thy Christian duty to walk circumspectly, holily, and humbly, so far as in thee lies; but not to make thy duties thy Saviours, these indeed adorn the soul, but are not the life of the Soul: these may testifie thy Sanctification, but are not the things that Sanctifie: this is thy duty to do, and yet to expect Salvation by Christ, not by these: do this thou oughtest, and after acknowledge, that thou art *but an unprofitable servant, and has done no more then was thy duty to do*, Luke 17. 10.

5. Beware of Pride and Self-conceit. There is no greater enemy to faith, and the welfare of thy soul then this, for this makes thee *think thou art something, when thou art nothing*, Gal. 6. 3. And that thou art better and wiser then others, when thou art the worst of all, and *knowest nothing yet as thou ought'st to know*, 1 Cor. 8. 2. Look over all the Scriptures and you shall find the most humble and the most holy to have the lowest thoughts of themselves; and the vilest to most glory in their piety, and plead their purity; even to God himself: but the confession of Gods dearest children, and most approved servants, speeks another language. *Surely I am more brutish then any man*, (saith Agur,) *and have not the understanding of a man; I neither have learned wisdom, nor have the*

knowledge of the most High, *Prov.* 30. 2, 3. But others say, *Stand by thy self, I am holier then thou, though the worst of men, Isa.* 65. 5. The proud Pharisee *blessed God* for that he was not as other men are, *Extortioners, Unjust, Adulterers*, &c. *Luke* 18. 11. So thou *Laodicea* like, *saist think thy self rich and increased in goods, and to have need of nothing; when thou art poor and miserable, and blind, and naked, Rev.* 3. 17. But we find *Smyrna*, in tribulation and poverty; poor in the eye of the World, and poor in her own eyes, to be rich before God. *Rev.* 2. 9. Christ has told us, he came not to save the righteous, that is, those that were just and holy in their own eyes, and saw no need of a Saviour; but to call sinners to repentance, even those that saw and felt themselves to be sinners, *Matth.* 9. 13. And now O wretched man consider, what hast thou to be proud of: was thou not born a sinner? and hast thou not liv'd a sinner? canst thou profit the most high, or run him on the score? hast thou done any more, or yet so much as was thy duty to do? and shall the servant be lifted up, when he has onely done his duty, much less when he has failed in performance of it: and that thou and I have done, do, do, and can do no otherwise! in fine therefore remember, God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble, *James* 4. 6. *He that exalteth himself shall be abased, but who so humbleth himself shall be exalted, Luke* 14. 11.

6, Take

6. Take heed of living in ignorance: this is a a great enemy to Salvation, and yet (alas) how much does it abound among us? how shallow and ridiculous apprehentions have many among us of God and Christ, and what they have done, and do yet for them, who have been constant hearers of able Ministers for many years together: and yet after all are sinfully ignorant, because wilfully ignorant? Not knowing what they were by nature, what they might be by grace, and how far, and for what cause, they stand obliged to God in duty! Therefore use you as thou tenderest the welfare of thy soul, all means to remove this darkness and ignorance which is so dangerous: (a good means to which may be the directions for attaining faith,) an ignorant person is made a pray to any deceiver, being easily drawn aside to any faction, as not being able to distinguish between truth and error, light and darkness, Opinion and Religion, Faith and fancy: as blind men may be easily deceived in colours, so these in Religion.

7. Beware of making thy self thy Saviour: there is something of the Pope in men naturally: they would first be Saints, and then come to Christ to be saved: first be holy, and then be happy, and ordinarily over look Christ, or mistrust he will not accept them, till they are without sin; if I were more humble and holy (may many a poor soul say;) if I could pray better, do as I

would, and be as good as I could wish: I could then hope for acceptance with Christ, and for Adoption from God, and to enjoy Heaven and Felicity! (Pity: how many thus for many years perplex themselves,) but were not this man to be thine own Saviour? if thou wert holy or could'st be, before thou comest to Christ, or couldst merit Gods favour, and by consequence Salvation, then what needest thou a Saviour? but as this is not required of thee, neither can it be performed by thee. If thou wouldst be saved come to Christ for justification, and by him to God for reconciliation: and so to the Trinity for Sanctification: that by their help thou maist be made holy, for of thy self thou art able to do nothing, and he that standeth by himself shall find it impossible to stand: but we must sue to Heaven for assistance as sensible of our weakness. I have thus said, not that any should presume, but that none should mistake: the whole course of Holy Writ, engages to a Holy life, that all that read it, or that here it read may discern: but I add this in reference to the beginning of this Holy Life, which even seems to begin in, and is a sight and sense of sin, Christ coming to save sinners, *Matth.* 9. 13. And inviting *all that are weary and heavy laden, to come and take his Yoak, and they shall find rest for their souls, Matth.* 11. 28. Yea, when in their uncleanness and blood, altogether despiceable, to such he says live, *Ezek.* 15. 6.

15. 6. But after this his acceptance of them, expects their acceptance of, and obedience to him, as appears, *Matt.* 7. 21. *Not every one that saith unto me Lord, Lord, shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven, but he that doth the Will of my Father which is in Heaven.*

5. This farther affords matter of consolation, and that,

1. To all those that are believers.

2. To those that will upon better thoughts resolve upon the work. For the

First, What can be more comfortable then to be ready for all conditions? Yet so is the believer provided for prosperity, and for adversity: ready to die, and fit to live: knows how to live in this World, and how to leave it for a better. Thieves cannot rob him of his Heavenly Treasure; Fire cannot burn it: nor Seas drown it. Death cannot seperate him from his Spiritual Wealth, nor adverse Fortune spoyl him of it. Satans malice cannot mischief him, nor Hells horour affright him. And, is not this a happy condition? if he live 'tis to Christ, 'tis with Christ: and if he die, 'tis his gain, that he may receive a more full and free fruition of his only Lord and Saviour: for then he shall be more with him then ever before, and (which is best) shall never be more seperated from him. Death that parts others from their wealth, brings him to a full enjoyment of his! what makes others miserable,

makes him happy! and what begins others endleſs pains, end all his ſorrows! What others fear that he wiſhes; where others looſe their joys there he finds his! Death ends the ſinners ſolace and begins the Saints! O happy caſe, heres comfort indeed! And

Secondly, As it is thus conſolatory to the believer, ſo will it be to all that upon better conſideration will ſet about the work: and never leave working and praying till they have gotten this work wrought in their hearts. What greater conſolation can there be to ſinners, then to think that mercy may be had? what greater joy to a condemned perſon, then the offer of his pardon? and is not this the ſtate of each returning ſinner? ſinned he has indeed, and forfeited all favours, yea lies under a Sentence of condemnation: but yet has life offered unto him, if he will but believe! 'tis but turn and live; believe and be ſaved: though he lay under a Sentence of Death and Damnation before! and canſt thou deſire more? many have been the ſins of thy life, and the leaſt of theſe have deſerved death: and yet God is willing to paſs by all theſe, if thou wilt but now come in! 'tis yet thine own falt if thou and he be at odds, and thou be a ſtranger at the Throne of Grace? 'tis thine own falt if Chriſt be not thine, and thou his! 'tis thy falt if God be not thy God, thy Father, and thou his Son! 'tis thine own falt if thou miſs of Felicity, and fall into misery!

miſery? for God has offered thee himſelf, his Son and all his merits, and Heaven as the ſum of all his purchaſe: has ſent his Miniſters to invite thee: will after all thy paſt put-offs and delays, now at laſt receive thee! if thou wilt but come in, accept the condition of reconſiliation, and fulfill the ſame; and canſt thou deſire more? if thou art filthy he can waſh thee in that *Fountain opened for ſin and for uncleanneſs, Zak.* 13. 1. *Though thy ſins were as red as Scarlet, he can make them as white as Snow: and though Crimſon coulerd yet as Wooll, Iſa.* 1. 18. Art thou weary? he offers thee reſt: art thou weak? he offers ſupportation: if thou wilt but believe! art thou blind? he has eye Salve: art thou naked he has cloathing, *Rev.* 3. 18. Art thou wounded? he has, or rather is, Balm, yea, the healing Balm of *Gilead*, which alone can cure a wounded Spirit: *Jer.* 8. 22. Art thou ſick? he is the Phyſitian of Soul and Body: art thou dead he can raiſe thee up and give thee life, *Eph.* 5. 14. And what canſt thou deſire more? and what canſt wiſh to do leſs, then what is propoſed? 'tis but believe *and all is thine, and thou art Chriſts, and Chriſt is Gods*, 1 *Cor.* 3. 22, 23. And is not this encouragement enough?

6. Uſe is for direction. But now, may ſome ſay upon ſerious conſideration, this is good, and happy 'tis to be in ſo good a caſe, but how ſhall I come to be ſo? were this thy deſire Reader, how glad ſhould I be to perſwade thee to it, and direct

thee

thee in it; the best I can, in order to which take these Directions.

1. If it be thy desire to get thy heart furnished with saving faith, thou be sure to be frequent in reading and hearing the Word of God, and Meditating thereon: for, faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God, *Rom.* 10. 17. Make this therefore thy great work and care.

Object. But I have been a constant hearer these many years, and yet find not this grace wrought upon my soul.

Answ. It appears then thou hast been a customary hearer only, and not a cordial one, a superficial hearer not a sincere one, Or

2. Thou hast not well provided thy self for hearing, perhaps thou didst not beg God to provide thy heart for to partake of hearing, and reading, or else not begged God's assistance for thy Minister: that he would please to enable him to speak a word in season to thy soul, and that seasonable word with life and power to thy conscience: that his words may come from the heart, to the heart, or

3. Hast not drawn near to God in his Ordinances with any aw, or reverence of the great Majesty thou art to appear before: or any sense of the weight of the business thou art to appear about. Alas, how do many men rush into the presence of God, with no more reverence, aw, or seriousness

seriousnes of thoughts, then if they were to meet in a Market or Fair, about their ordinary busines? and perhaps thou hast been one of these: or

4. Thou hast not been careful to keep thy heart attentively, and with all diligence, whilst thou hast been hearing: but when thou hast brought thy body into Gods presence, hast suffered thy heart to wander whether it pleaseth, or to be stoln from thee, and carried away by vain thoughts, and Worldly imaginations, or some inconsiderable fantasies. How many are there, who when they have taken the pains, to come a mile, two or three, to hear a Sermon; have by this means lost all, or the greatest part of their labour? and have gone away unable to give any good account of any one part of the Sermon, they were at so much pains to come so far to hear! Many there are that may say to their hearts, as the Prophet to his Servant, 2 *Kings* 5. 25. Whence comest thou *Gehazy*? When the Sermon is over, and they going out of the Church: and they begin to consider where their thoughts have been wandering, and whether their fancies have carried them, and how it had almost lost them: but altogether made them loose their labour in what they came about.

May not many men say at conclusion of a Sermon:

mon: Oh heart where hast thou been? and y thoughts, whether have you run? and thou fanc where hast thou roved? and thou mind, whe hast thou been wandring.

How may many say to their hearts as *Mary* i another case to our Saviour, *if thou hadst been her my Brother had not dyed*, *Luke* 11. 32. So the may say to their hearts: when their thoughts r turn from wandring, and they come to themselv (for they have been little better then in a dream all or most of Prayer and Sermon time,) had' thou been here heart, I had not lost my labor: ha not you wandered (thoughts) I had had my par in Prayers, and my part of a profitable Sermon which might have done me good as long as I ha lived.

Now may that man repent his folly, but too late to recal Yesterday, it being past: the op portunity is lost, and the day is gone, and per haps thou by thy carelessness hast lost, what thou maist never hear of again. And how many ar there, that thus miserablely disappoint themselves by slumbring and sleeping, as well as otherwise? and hast thou been guilty of none of those erron either before or in hearing? if thou hast, no marvel if all thy hearing prove so fruitless and afford thee no more of comfort: but

5. A farther cause of thy unfruitfulness, may be

be want of laying up the Word which thou hast heard; perhaps thou hast not been so careful as thou should'st in imeditating upon what thou hast heard, and making it thine own.

The Seed that is sown seldom comes to good, unless it be covered with the Plow, or the Harrow, now Meditation is the Harrow of the Word, whereby it is hid in the heart, and rooted in the memory, that hence it may produce fruit in the life. I have often observed the prejudice that men do themselves in this: when (forgetting the shallowness of their memories, and the deceitfulness of their own heart:) either they get on a knot at the Church door, or into company going home: and there fall into talk of other matters, as of the Wind or the Weather, their ways to Church, or how far they live from it: how the prices of Wheat and Cattle were, the last Market or Fair: what Harvest is like to be, and how heavy the Taxes are upon them: and such like by business, or Worldly concern, till they have so fully forgotten every word of the Sermon, that they cannot tell where the Text was, and much less then, what was urged from it! Now perhaps this has been thy case: and if so 'tis certain, by such means as these, all thy hearing is soon made useless: for discourses of such inconsiderable things, and trifles, will as soon do it,

as

as the more weighty affairs and cares of t
world: which with *the deceitfulness of riches u*
ally choak the Word, and make it altogether unfru
full, *Matt.* 13. 22.

6. If thou art guilty of none of these, yet wa
of living up to, and living over what thou he
est, may be a farther reason of thy fruitl
hearing: for men must lay out as well as lay u
if they mean to get profit: he that hid his T
lent in a Napkin, had small profit by it, a
by it, and could give but a bad account of
Luke 19. 20. 'Tis *not the hearers of the Law, b*
the doers of the Law, that shall be justified, *Ro*
2. 13. *Those that are onely hearer of the Word, a*
not doers also, deceive themselves, *James* 1. 2
This is most certainly the great reason we ha
so much barrenness after all our labour, and yo
are so unfruitful after your pains: because yo
live not over what you hear. Had men but don
what they have been taught: we should hav
had another manner of World then we have
And hadst thou but lived over what thou ha
heard, thou hadst been another manner of ma
then thou art.

Well. One of these I reckon the cause of th
unfruitfulness: and one (or rather all) of the
directions

directions: I shall counsel thee to make use of for the cure.

1. Be sure to provide thy heart, for the hearing of the Word, by a timely and serious considering of thine own state: and the benefit that the Word affords for the cure of thy maladies: Pray therefore to God to prepare thy heart for hearing, and receiving of the Word.

2. Pray for thy Minister that God would direct and enable him, to speak to thy condition, and that he may profit all in general, and thy soul in particular: that he may speak plainly and profitably to the capacity of the meanest, and powerfully, convincingly, and satisfactorily to the judgement and understanding of the strongest: and sincerely, awakingly, and affectionately in the evidence and demonstration of the Spirit, and with power unto all.

3. Having thus done get thy heart into a reverend frame, get an aw of the Majesty thou art to appear before upon thy Spirit: and a sense of the weight of the work, and concern of the business thou goest about upon thy heart: and then draw nigh, as one that understood himself on Earth, and God in Heaven: as one truly sensible of his own vileness, and Gods purity: as one acquainted

acquainted with his own unworthiness, and God's greatness, as sensible of thine own madness and his Might, of thine own sinfulness and his Holyness; of thine own being Dust and Ashes, and of his Glory, Wisdom, Majesty and Power. That thou art now to hear for eternity: that 'tis for the good of thy soul: that thou must shortly be accountable for this days hearing: that thou must therefore hear as for thy Life, hear as for Heaven, and hear as one must to Hell, if by hearing thou art not fitted for Heaven: having thus framed thy heart for duty.

4. Look to thy heart in duty: take heed of sleep, vain thoughts, and wandring fancies: which will rob thee of all.

5. Take heed of vain and idle discourses after hearing, and of Earthly and Worldly affairs, lest these choack the Word, and make it altogether unfruitful: if thou fall into talk, let it be of what thou hast heard: and of that especially, which concerns thy condition: or if thou knowst those thou happ'nst to be in company with, to be such as favour not such discourses, then slack thy pace and let them pass on: or mend thy pace and outgo them, that so thou maist enjoy thine own more serious thoughts.

6. But

6. Be sure make it thy business to live up to what thou heares't: and live over what truths thou hast been taught. Let it be each weeks business, to put that in practice thou wast taught from Gods Word on the Lords day.

If thou wilt, or canst resolve to make this thy course, before in and after hearing: I doubt not but thy future hearing, will be much more profitable to thee, then thy past hearing hath been; and that by so, and such manner of hearing, Faith (that necessary Grace,) will be begotten in thy heart, and bring forth fruit in thy life, to thy comfort here, and eternal welfare hereafter.

2. *Direction.* As thou should'st hear the Word: so make it the rule of thy life: labour not onely to know, but also to live according to knowledge.

For not he that saith Lord, Lord, shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven: But he that doth the will of God that is in Heaven, Matth. 7. 21. Thou maist know much and yet be damned: but when or where was, (or shall) the doing Christian ever be damned? *He that knoweth his Masters will and doth it not shall be beaten with many stripes. Luke* 12. 47. And doth it not then concern every man

to take heed of neglecting known duties? if men could be brought to do the good they know, and what their own conscience tell them is their duty, should not we have another manner of World then we have? But the great reason why there is so much villany among us: is not because Men know no better: but because though men know much, they will not live up to what they know: and those that know lest, will not be perswaded to live up to that little they do know: if thou therefore love thy soul, be sure to live up to thy knowledge, and what thou knowst the Word of God directeth thee to do, and requireth at thine hand, that be sure to do as far as in thee lies.

3. Ask counsel of thy diligent Minister, that watcheth over thy soul as he that must give an account for the same. Thou would'st be loath to buy a parcel of Land, but thou wilt enquire of they Lawyer as to thy Estate, whether the Title be good: and whether thou maist safely lay out thy Money: Neither wilt thou trust thine own skill, if thy Estate be called in question, and thou be in danger of loosing of it: but the ablest Counsel shall be sought out, Rod to and Consulted with. If thou hast a bone out of joynt: thou wilt not trust every one to set it: or if thou art dangerously sick in thy body, thou wilt

wilt not trust thine own skill, or lean to thine own understanding, to the hazard of thy health and life: but consult the best skill in Physick.

And canst thou imagine thy self wiser in Spirituals then in Temporals. Or hast thou such low thoughts of thy Minister, as to imagine a Lawyer, a Physitian, and perhaps an Emperick, more skilful in their Arts, then he in his great imployments? Or dost thou imagine thy soul does not deserve so much care as thy body? or that it is not so well worth thy labour, to assure thy self of Heaven, or to obtain the health of thy soul, as to make sure of a Temporal Estate, and thy bodily health? if thou art not guilty in one of these three: but dost value Heaven as much as Earth, the judgement of thy Minister, as much as the opinion of thy Lawyer; the skill of a Bone-setter, or the judgement of thy Physitian: and the health of thy soul to all Eternity, as well as the health of thy body for a time: then ask Counsel, seek advice and help: and if the case be difficult trust not to one, unless the more able.

But as in desperate sickness 'tis prudence to consult many Physitians: and in hard cases to entertain many Counsellers: so in mat-

ters of concern, to conſult many and able Divines.

4. Go to God ask helps of him, and begg grace from him: deſire Faith of him, if thou find'ſt thou want'ſt it: and beg increaſe of it, if thou haſt it: for 'tis his gift, and he has promiſed to give to thoſe that ask: Yea, *he giveth liberally, and obraideth not*, *James* 1. 5. And now man, 'tis a mercy thou haſt ſuch a God to go to. A God whoſe ears are open unto all that call upon him in ſincerity: A God that is both able and willing to do for thoſe that ſeek to him: a God that hath obliged himſelf to do for all thoſe that ask of him in his Sons Name.

5. Add to thy Prayers, thine own endeavours: up and be doing man, thou heardſt at beginning the ſad effects of ſloath. Faith is a working grace and will not be won by idleneſs: it makes men buſie in duty; and abominates ſloath.

Is laboureous in piety, and ſhuns all that are lazy, reſolve therefore upon thy buſineſs; [for to accept of Chriſt for thy Saviour, Teacher, King and Ruler:] Reſolve to live in obedience to what he commands, and to live over what he Teaches thee, and anſwerable to what he requires and injoyns.

Own

Own him here, and he will own thee hereafter; 'tis not for a man to lie in a Ditch, and cry Lord help me out, and never endeavour to get up himself: he may lie there till he dies, for all his prayers, if he do not as well strive as pray.

Æsop Fables, of the *Rustick*, who having set his Cart in the Mire, and conceiving no probability of getting out, betakes himself to his prayers, and calls upon *Hercules* to help him, whom the Heathens account the God of strength (for you must know they had a God for each attribute of the Divine Nature.) Upon which *Hercules* appears, (but to obraid, rather then help,) and says, *O idle Fellow, heave at the Wheel, and whip the Horses, and then thou shalt see that* Hercules *will be present:* as if he had said, do thine own duty first, use thine own endeavours, and then if thou pray for help, thou shalt have it.

Learn hence, that in the Heathens apprehentions, God would never help them that would not help themselves. And the truth is, the main damning cause at last will be: not because men did not more then they could, but because men did not so much what they should, as they could do.

Those that did what they could, and sought to

God for what they wanted: never yet miſcarried in their buſineſs. But he that doth either labour without God, or call on God without labour, is ordinarily diſappointed in his expectation: or miſcaries in his great undertaking.

6. Be much in Meditation, and oft conſider what thou art, where thou art, whether thou art going; and what thy condition will be, if thou want the grace of Faith. Duſt thou art, travelling to Duſt, and travelling beyond duſt; and thy Eſtate of all mens moſt miſerable, *if thou fall ſhort of the Grace of God, Heb.* 12. 15.

7. Bring thy ſelf to the Law, compare it and thy life together: conſider how thou haſt led thy life, and how the Law requires thou ſhould'ſt live: and how ſhort thy life has been, of this rule of Life! what each Law commands, conſider, and how thou haſt broken them all! And though this charge may ſeem ſtrange at firſt, yet, for thy conviction let me give thee a taſte; perhaps thou haſt not been a Worſhipper of falſe Gods: but yet haſt had low thoughts of the true God: and haſt not ſerved him in faith, hope and love as thou oughteſt.

Thou haſt not ſet up Idols in thy houſe, but maiſt have done ſo in thy heart, as thoſe *Ezek.* 14.

14. 3. *&c.* That is: though thou haſt not worſhiped thy Silver or thy Gold, a Stock or a Stone, thy Lands, Luſts, or Pleaſures: yet if thou love theſe better then God, thou art a breaker of the firſt and ſecond precept: and art unworthy of thy Saviour, *Matth.* 10. 37.

Thou maiſt be no Swearer, yet one that has not in duty to God and Man, duly reproved Swearing, and therefore guilty of the breach of that precept, *Lev.* 19. 17. Thou haſt not profaned Sabbaths, yet not Sanctified them as thou oughteſt, *Iſa.* 58. 13. Thou haſt not diſhonoured Father nor Mother, yet perhaps been no obedient Child to them: nor ſo careful of their honour as thou ſhouldeſt.

Thou haſt not murdered thy Neighbour, yet haſt been angry with thy brother without cauſe: *Matth.* 5. 21. *&c.* Thou haſt not been an Adulterer: yet haſt looked and luſted: which is a breach of the precept; and ſo of the reſt, *Mat.* 5. 27. All this conſidered, then ſee

Firſt, How unable thou art to keep one of theſe precepts: and how thou haſt and doeſt break all!

Secondly, Consider well what the least sin deserveth.

Thirdly, How certainly thou art undone, and damned to all Eternity by Law: as appears

1. Because by the Law thou art a sinner.

2. Thou canst not satisfie the Law for the least sin past, and that because all thou canst do is but thy duty; and when thou hast done all 'tis not so much as thy duty, and as the Law requires: therefore by double diligence no satisfaction by Law, for any thing that is past: because the most thou canst do is too little to satisfie the Law for present.

3. Because, should all that is past be pardoned, yet thou canst not keep even with the Law for future: by Law, *There is no man liveth and sinneth not! Eccl.* 7. 20. Needs then must thou perish, if there were no other means of Salvation, but the Law: and every man despair of mercy, if there be not another way found out, by which we may be saved.

Therefore the Law is but our School-master, to lead us to Christ: *Gal.* 3. 24. Shewing us the impossibility of being saved of, or by our selves: the

the neceſſity of a Mediator, by reaſon of our own inability to ſatisfie the Law, in the purity of works, words, and thoughts, that it requires from all: Seeing therefore there is no Salvation in thy ſelf, by thine own deeds, or in the Law; Then

Laſtly, Seriouſly conſider and often Meditate upon thy neceſſity of a Saviour: as alſo Chriſts willingneſs to ſave thee; imagine him ſtanding with open arms to receive thee: think thou ſeeſt him running to meet thee: like the tender Father his Prodigal Son, *Luke* 15. 20. And as if he thought thou did'ſt not come faſt enough, hear how he calls to thee to haſten thy pace, and how earneſtly he invited thee: *Come unto me all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and ye ſhall find reſt for your ſouls*, *Matth.* 11. 28. *If any man thirſt let him come unto me and Drink*, *John* 7. 37. *Come buy Wine and Milk without Money, and without Price*, *Iſa.* 55. 1. *Drink of the Waters of life freely*, *Rev.* 22. 17.

Come thou, up, cloſe with Chriſts offers and invitations: take him at his word, and take him on his own conditions, (be ſure he will ſhrink from neither:) ſo thou ſhalt be his and he thine: and thou ſhalt find *his Yoak is eaſie and light*, *Matth.* 11. 30. *And that his Commandments are*

not

not grievous, 1 *John* 5. 3. Believe in him, obey him, and let him rule in thine heart, and be beloved more then all, and served before all, and the match is made up between Christ and thy Soul, and thou made a compleat believer.

Let me now close up all with an earnest intraty and perswasion, in each particular to close with these directions laid down. And to this end remember, it is for thy life, and thy soul, and eternal happiness.

If thou hast any love for thy soul, regard of thy Life, or hopes of Heaven, let it be thy care to follow these directions, and by these and all other good means, to labour to get thy heart furnished with Faith: and to the end I may prevail with thee consider these things of weight.

First, Thou art not sure to be out of Hell one moment, if thou art an unbeliever, nor so long as thou darest to continue such. When thou risest in the morning, thou art not sure but thou maist take up thine eternal lodgings in everlasting burnings ere night: and when thou liest down at night, thou knowest not but thou maist awake in Torments before the next morning: when thou goest abroad, thou art not sure of returning to any other home, but that long one of eternal misery and

and when thou comest home, thou know'st not how soon Death may turn thee out of doors; and thrust thee into eternal darkness.

And is not this a dangerous estate? what man that hath any care of his soul, would venture it upon this score? Had'st thou an Estate depending only on thine own life: thou would'st scarce sleep in thy Bed (if an indulgent parent) till thou had'st purchased it for thy Children: that they may be provided for when thou goest hence: and yet how careless art thou for thy self now going hence, and in danger every day to be turned out of door, as if it concerned thee more, to provide for others then thy self; and for their welfare rather, when thou art gone hence, then for thine own, when thou hast no longer to stay here.

Secondly, Think seriously what 'tis keeps thee of from thus coming over to, & closing with Christ. Nothing but lusts and sins, that thou must shortly part with, (if thou wilt not now,) and what thou must eternally be damned for, because thou would'st not be perswaded to part with. Hast thou then lost thy reason? art thou resolved damnation shall be thy portion? and to purchase Hell, what ere it cost thee; and to throw away thy interest in felicity, and thrust Salvation from thee?

thee? if thou hast not bost thy reason: judge whether Heaven be not better then Earth; or the Creator to be believed before the Creature, and thy Lord to be obeyed, rather then thy lusts: what reason is there this flesh, this Worms meat, this dust and ashes, should be obeyed before, and served more then the God of Glory? who should rule, sense, or reason? and who should obey Flesh or Spirit? *shall not he that Sowes to the Flesh reap corruption? Gal.* 6. 7, 8. Thou must be a believer first, or last, or else, be undone for ever.

Thirdly, Consider Man, Infidelity is a sin against the Gospel, and is therefore the most sinking sin: if thou sinnest against the Law, as all do, 1 *Kings* 8. 46. Thou hast the Gospel to fly to: but if thou sin against the Gospel, then *there remains no more Sacrifice for sin, but a certain fearfull looking for of Judgement*, *Hebr.* 10. 26, 27. Understand me to speak of the final unbeliever: otherwise we know, the Gospel admits of such as have sinned against the Gospel. But those who finally go on in a course of infidelity, have and do (in so doing) deprive themselves of all mercy: having to the last rejected the Lord that bought them, and in so doing thrust from them their own Salvation: and if thou do so farewell all; thou art undone for ever.

Excuse

Excuse. Though I am not yet a believer, I intend to be one yet before I die: and though I am not now what I should be, yet I resolve on better for the future: I answer, is this all hinders: then in answer seriously consider the next Motive or incitement.

4. Consider seriously with me, that thou canst call no time thine own, but the present time: *to day, if you will hear his Voice, harden not your hearts*, *Psalm* 93. 8. *Hebr.* 3. 8, 15. and 4. 7. And boast not of to morrow, for thou know'st not what a day may bring forth. But if not now, when is it thou intendest this shall be done? suppose it be next Year (for sure thou wilt not be so presumpteous, as to promise thy self many years,) or else next Month, or Weak, which of these? and suppose thou live to see the fixed time thou hast set, (which perhaps thou maist never do?) Art thou sure the same lusts, or cares, or profits or pleasures that have hetherto entangled thee, and held back thy heart from this duty; and made thee so irresolute to this day, and at this hour.

Art thou sure these will not then prevail? and cause thee make another delay, and put of thy business till the next Year or Month, *&c.* and so these lusts prevailing, may cause thee delay from time to time, till it be too late! but if a resolu-

tion

tion will carry it (as doubtless it will do much it) why not resolve now as well as hereafter, t year as well as the next, and to day as well as morrow; since this is most safe, and the other together dangerous? Are not thy sins yet gr enough in number, but thou must yet make th more? Nor grievous enough in nature, but th must yet agravate them? making them heavi by sinning against more mercies, and great light, and lowder calls! O resolve man, resolve for what if Death should sease thee before th art resolved! and send thee hence before th work be done? what a miserable case wilt th then be in? moreover: dost not thou think th there are thousands now in Hell: that were on (as thou art) convinced that they were not fit fo Heaven: and as fully resolved to provide them selves before they dyed: and to be better, and o ther men then they were; and saw a necessity so being: but could not be perswaded to part with their lusts, but put off this great con cern from this, time and that time, till at last thei time came to an end, before their work wa brought to a beginning: and then all their pur poses were in vain, and too late; and now they must eternally suffer pains that have no end, be cause they would not part with their sins before their end.

There-

Therefore O man take heed, and again, take heed: that thou dost not so deceive thy self, with hopes of future Faith, future Repentance, and future obedience and amendment; till all thy time be ended, and thou hast nothing left but future and eternal misery: for thus it too to often happens to those that trust to be saved by a future Faith.

Fifthly, Consider, Life and Death lies on it: Salvation and Damnation: if thou believest thou shalt be saved: if thou believest not, thou shalt be damned, (so says the Text.) No Faith, no Life: this is not only the Physick, but the food of thy soul. Were, man, the life of thy dearly beloved Wife, or tenderly affected Child, or some dear Friend or Relation at stake: and it lay in thee to cure or kill, to save or to destroy, to help, or let them perish for want of help; Would thou not run and ride, study and break thy sleep, and night and day use all endeavours for their safety? or woman would'st thou not be at any pains for the welfare of thy Husband or Child? or Child would'st thou think any hazard too much for the good of thy Parents? if not: who, man, can be nearer to thee, then thine own soul? can Husband, Wife, Father, Mother, Sister, Brother, or any other friend be more neer or dear to thee, then thine own soul? yet others would

would condemn thee, and probablely thou would'st condemn thy self; wast thou as careless of any of these, as thou art of thine own soul! is it worth so much cost and pains and care and does reason tell thee so, as well as pitty and piety, to preserve the life Temporal of one of these thy Friends and Relations. And is it not of far more, and greater concern, to preserve thy self thine own life, thy soul, thy precious and immortal soul, (which all the World cannot equal the worth of,) from Death and Eternal misery? think on it man.

Sixthly, Consider thou hast now more mercy, and more means of grace to answer for then ever yet thou had'st: and if thou goest on still in thine Infidelity, all will make for thy greater condemnation: *It shall be more tollerable for* Sodom, *and* Gomorrah, Tyre *and* Sydon, *at the last then for thee*, *Matth.* 11. 20. *&c.* and *Luke* 10. 13. They had never a Christ offered unto them, nor Salvation tendered and pressed upon them as thou hast had: nor the means of grace that thou enjoyest, nor so many warnings of their danger by Hell and Damnation as thou, nor so many and earnest intreaties to repent and amend; therefore if thou perish, thou dost perish with a witness: if thou sink, 'tis to the bottom.

Now, what a Mirrour of Mercy is it for, and to thy

thy soul: that 'tis not yet too late to turn from sin to God: and that 'tis not too late yet for thee, (though 'tis for many thousands beside thee,) now to accept of, close with, and believe in an offered Christ! How many of those are now in a hopeless, helpless, and remediless condition: that not long since delayed their business; under the same convictions that thou now liest under: and would not be prevailed with, to use the present time: yet presumed and hoped to have a time before they went hence: but alas, death prevented them: and so by delay they lost all opportunity of doing the work, that reason, Conscience, Scripture and Ministers told them was to be done, and must be done, and that they came into the World to do. Well for thee, thou art not as they! see to it, thou be not so.

Seventhly, How happy, oh how happy mayst thou be, and that to all eternity, if now at last thou wilt but take warning, and delay no longer? 'tis not yet too late: but, it will shortly be too late! Though thou hast squandered away many years, sinned against many mercies, neglected many means of grace, stopped thine ear against many a call, and many a warning! abused many a Divine favour, turned the grace of God into wantonness, and thrust Christ from thee very often: Yet! yet, if thou wouldst but now turn thou

might'ſt be happy for ever! if thou would'ſt now hear (now, ere it be too late) thy ſoul may live. Thouſands and ten thouſands are there, whoſe hearts would leap for joy ſhould they hear ſuch word: but, they are never like to hear it more they had their time and neglected it! and now thou haſt thy time: and if thou now neglect this time and opportunity, and this offer: thou may be in their remedileſs condition before thou hear an other ſuch an offer! as therefore thou tendereſt the welfare of thine own ſoul, hopeſt for happineſs, deſireſt Salvation, and dreadeſt miſery, now look to thy ſelf, up and be doing: the door of the Bride-chamber is not yet ſhut againſt thee, the Sun of righteouſneſs is not yet ſet upon thee, the day of grace is not yet over: but, if thou dareſt to trifle but a little longer, all this will ſhortly be. Therefore ſee to it ere 'tis too late. God is now ready to be reconciled; Chriſt offers himſelf, his Grace and Mirits: if thou wilt but accept of them and cloſe with them on his conditions; then ſhalt thou be Chriſts, and Chriſts be thine, and all be thine: ſo ſhalt thou live in peace, die with comfort, and raign in Glory, and be happy in Life, at Death, and after Death: free from Hell, ſure of Heaven, and ſafe in Eternal Felicity.

And now, Man, what can I ſay to thee more? much

much more (indeed) may be added: but it is not multitude of words, but the weight of the concern we speak to, that must prevail with rational men: and the weight of the arguments we press, and urge: if what has been said prevail not with thee, I presume it must be, as much because thou understandest not thy self and concerns in in, nor the weight of it, as my weakness in pressing, would God I knew what to say, and how to say, that I might prevail with thee, if this will not. But whether it do or not, I shall be bold to conclude with allusion to, and use of *Deut.* 30. 19. Behold I have set before thee Life and Good, and Death and Evil, now therefore chuse Life, Heaven and Hell, Glory and Torments, Happiness and Misery, eternal Felicity and Everlasting pains are set before thee, and the means how to attain the one, and escape the other, therefore if thou love thy God, thy self, thy soul, if thou fear Hell, and hope for Heaven, now look to thy self, and chuse for thine own eternal welfare, which that thou and I, and all of us may, the Lord in Mercy Grant. *Amen*, and *Amen*.

FINIS.